



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



EVANGELICAL UNION DOCTRINAL SERIES.

(THIRD ISSUE.)

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK.

EVANGELICAL UNION DOCTRINAL SERIES.



*The following Volumes of the Series are now ready.
Price 2s. 6d. each:—*

REGENERATION: Its Conditions and Methods.
By the Rev. ROBERT CRAIG, M.A.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. By the
Rev. ROBERT MITCHELL.



OTHERS IN PREPARATION.

THE
HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK:
ITS NATURE AND EXTENT.

BY
GEORGE CRON,
Pastor of Wellington Place E.U. Church, Belfast.



LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.
GLASGOW: THOMAS D. MORISON.
1880.

141. m. 822.

PREFACE.

I AVOW myself a worshipper of the Bible in much the same sense that some of the rigidly scientific in these days are worshippers of the works of nature. The words of prophets and apostles are not, in my judgment, essentially different from the words of the Lord Jesus. They are, therefore, "Spirit and life;" they can be nothing else, for they are the words of the Holy Spirit. In the preparation of this little volume, consequently, I have drawn with a free hand upon the Scriptures of Truth as the source of evidence and instruction; and it is hoped that by those into whose hands it may come it will be found lustrous, like the moon and the Christian

church, with light borrowed from the Book of which the Hymnist says—

“ It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.”

While engaged in its composition, I have been impressed with two things :—

(1.) That the work necessarily reveals the worker; and,

(2.) That in the Bible the Spirit is delightfully communicative concerning Himself and His mission.

Owing partly to the limited space at disposal, there are departments and aspects of the Divine Spirit's work on which I have not bestowed a single glance. I have confined myself to dealing with what I would term the central part of the Spirit's work, or that part of it with which we are personally concerned, and which has a practical bearing on the individual soul. I trust that what has been advanced in connection with the

various points discussed is largely pervaded by an element of "sweet reasonableness," and that I have so written as to bring myself and my labours within the gracious sweep of the promise expressed in these words—"Them that honour me I will honour."

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| THE GOD OF THE BIBLE TRI-PERSONAL, . . . | 13 |

CHAPTER II.

| | |
|--|----|
| THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, | 19 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER III.

| | |
|--|----|
| A SELECTION OF PROOFS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE SPIRIT, | 25 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER IV.

| | |
|--|----|
| FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT, DISTINCT PERSONS, . | 31 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER V.

| | |
|--|----|
| THE SPIRIT THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GODHEAD, . | 38 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER VI.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| THE SPIRIT ESSENTIALLY ACTIVE, . . . | PAGE 41 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|

CHAPTER VII.

| | |
|---|----|
| THE SPIRIT'S QUALITY AS A WORKER, . . . | 47 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER VIII.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| MAN'S DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT, . . . | 50 |
|---------------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER IX.

| | |
|---|----|
| A KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY NOT CONDITIONAL ON THE RISE OF SIN, . . . | 62 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER X.

| | |
|--|----|
| THE SPIRIT'S PART IN THE ECONOMY OF RE- DEMPTION, | 68 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER XI.

| | |
|--|----|
| REGENERATION NOT EFFECTED BY A TOUCH OF THE FINGER OF OMNIPOTENCE, OR NOT PRIOR TO, AND INDEPENDENT OF, FAITH IN THE GOSPEL, . . . | 73 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER XII.

| | |
|---|----|
| THE SPIRIT UNDER THE ASPECT OF "ANOTHER COMFORTER," AND TRUTH HIS GRAND INSTRU- MENT, | 83 |
|---|----|

CHAPTER XIII.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| SPIRITUAL LIFE BEGUN AS WELL AS DEVELOPED | |
| BY MEANS OF TRUTH, | 91 |

CHAPTER XIV.

| | |
|--|----|
| EVIDENCE AGAINST THE DOGMA OF REGENERATION | |
| BEFORE FAITH, | 98 |

CHAPTER XV.

| | |
|--|-----|
| THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT IN, TO, AND WITH | |
| THE RENEWED SOUL, | 103 |

CHAPTER XVI.

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHRISTIANS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST, | 115 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER XVII.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| WALKING BY THE SPIRIT, | 123 |
|----------------------------------|-----|

CHAPTER XVIII.

| | |
|---|-----|
| THE HOLY SPIRIT EVERY MAN'S FRIEND TO THE | |
| LAST, | 129 |

CHAPTER XIX.

| | |
|--|-----|
| THE CERTAINTY OF THE CHANGE FROM GLORY TO | |
| GLORY, AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, | 137 |

CHAPTER XX.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| THE RESISTIBILITY OF THE SPIRIT, . . . | 147 |

CHAPTER XXI.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| THE WORLD THE SPIRIT'S FIELD, . . . | 160 |
|-------------------------------------|-----|

CHAPTER XXII.

| | |
|---|-----|
| MORE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK, | 171 |
|---|-----|

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE TRI-PERSONAL.

It should cost those who realise that manifold are the uses of mystery no effort to make the admission that the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the mysteries of our holy religion. We know the fact, but are not able to explain it; and this is not to be wondered at, for, as has been justly observed, "If God were perfectly explicable to a finite being He would not be God." There is no humility in acknowledging that there is no one thing of which we have a perfect knowledge. If we have not by searching found out life, or death, or ourselves, or the objects that surround us, it may well be supposed that we have not found out the Almighty unto perfection. Indeed, to all intelligent

creatures God will be an eternal mystery. The universe is practically inexhaustible. How much more God! There is in man a tendency, never stronger than at present, to exaggerate the amount of his knowledge. In respect of knowledge he is both great and little. He knows that grass grows, but how is as real a mystery to him as the doctrine of the Trinity.

For the knowledge of this fundamental truth we are indebted to revelation. It is not revealed to us in nature, understanding by that term the sum-total of created things which constitute our environment. Nature bears witness to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; but it gives no hint of a plurality of persons or subsistents in the Godhead. So far as earth is concerned, man is God's masterpiece; but there is nothing in ourselves to suggest the doctrine of the Trinity. How far human reason can advance in the discovery of truth is a difficult point to settle; but it is doubtful whether, in the absence of the Bible and all equivalents, we should ever have attained to the knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity. That it contradicts reason is an assertion more easily made than proven. We are not warranted in saying more than

this—that it transcends reason. Some do not hesitate to tell us that reason and conscience demand the doctrine. The late Charles Kingsley goes so far as to say that if it is not a truth it ought to be; and certainly it is not easy to see how without it salvation from sin can be effected. Atonement and the sanctification of the soul must strike most people as works which no mere creature can perform. It is maintained by the lovers and cultivators of philosophy, that if the unity of God be conceived of as strictly absolute, He cannot be a self-conscious Being; and much can be said in support of this position. There is in us a social element, and its existence is a kind of preparation for the doctrine of the Trinity, or a niche in which to set it. We learn from Scripture that we have been made in the image of God; and it is for us to consider whether or not the Creator's is a social nature. If the writer of the hymn in which occurs this line—

“A social nature, yet alone,”

was not justified in so expressing himself, it follows that, assuming that there is in God a disposition for intelligent spiritual communion, there is no provision in His own nature for its gratification. To have society He must first

create it ; but this is hardly consistent with either the independence or the perfection which we are constrained to associate with God. As parents enjoy fellowship with their little children, so God enjoys fellowship with angels above and saints below ; but—(1.) Is not worthier, loftier, and more satisfying fellowship required ? (2.) How is it to be had, if it be denied that the doctrine of the Trinity has a place in the inspired volume ? Unaided reason may not be equal to its discovery, and yet, when brought face to face with it, it may have no difficulty in accepting it and acquiescing in it. That God is one in the sense in which individually we are one is one extreme of belief ; that there are “ gods many and lords many ” is another extreme ; and the truth appears to lie in a mysterious combination of these two beliefs. At least, the Bible teaches that God is Three and One in different senses—that He is a Triune Being ; and it is remarkable that in the book which claims to be, and has been so widely received as a Divine production, He should be presented in this light. This fact has surely to be accounted for.

It is no argument against the doctrine of the Trinity, that there is need for the utmost

care in the statement of it. We should, of course, avoid so stating it as to convey the idea that Father, Son, and Spirit are simply three manifestations of the one Being, or that they are three Gods. While on this and every subject we should seek to be wise up to what is written, we should guard against being wise above what is written. The closer we keep to the language of the sacred penmen the better, liable as we are at all times to err, and especially when dealing with a doctrine so thickly enveloped in "clouds and darkness" as that of the Trinity.

As little is it an argument against the doctrine of the Trinity that it cannot be illustrated. Numerous attempts have been made to illustrate it, but complete success has not attended any of them. Solar radiance—root, stem, and flower—intellect, will, and affections in the one soul, and similar illustrations, are examples of triplicity rather than tri-personality in unity. If intellect, will, and affections were three persons, instead of being three modes of activity of the one substance—mind—the illustration would be suitable; but it is not contended that they are three persons, so that it must be conceded that the doctrine

of the Trinity cannot be illustrated. That is no reason, however, why we should discard it. There are those who think that pure spirituality of nature is peculiar to God, and tri-personality may be peculiar to Him. We should never forget that, as Cousin expresses it, "God is all that we are, and nothing that we are;" and we should beware of laying ourselves open to the charge brought in one of the Psalms against the wicked man—"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself?" We are like God, but He must not be reduced to our level. Reason is a noble gift from the hand of "the Father of lights," and we should make the most of it; but happily as thinkers and reasoners we are not thrown entirely upon our own resources. It has pleased God to provide reason with a lamp external to itself; and we are debtors to revelation for what acquaintance we have with the fact and doctrine of the Trinity.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN the words which Jesus addressed to the disciples shortly before His crucifixion—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"—is expressed a principle of the Divine government. In the verbal communication of knowledge to men God is not limited by anything in Himself, but He is limited by their receptive capacity. His benevolence will not permit Him to reveal more truth of a moral and religious kind than they can receive and assimilate.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in the Jewish Scriptures there is not a free unveiling of the doctrine of the Trinity.

If those by whom "at sundry times and in divers manners" God spake to the chosen people had taught it with all plainness, or done what was equivalent, proclaimed the

deity of Messiah and of the Holy Spirit, the result might not have been good. The adoption of this course might have tended to breed confusion, to loosen their hold of what it was so important they should firmly grasp—the essential truth of God's unity.

It is true wisdom, as well as true kindness, to withhold from finite and fallible intelligences truths which they are not capable of receiving and appreciating. If God's ancient people could have borne a larger measure of knowledge than was communicated to them by Moses and the prophets, they would have been put in possession of more. Verily the revelation of truth requires to be timed.

In the Old Testament the doctrine of the Trinity is to a great extent assumed. In its various books peculiarities of name and grammar, distinctions, and formulas attract notice which do not admit of satisfactory explanation if the Christian Church have erred in believing and teaching that God is a tri-personal Being. We have intimations of the doctrine in the opening chapter of Genesis, which must have set the more thoughtful, speculative, and spiritually minded among the Jews a-thinking; and they seem, though

comparatively rare and scanty, to have been not altogether inoperative. It looks as if Nehemiah had caught a glimpse of it, for we find him making this acknowledgment—"Thou gavest them thy good Spirit to instruct them." How he could bring himself to use this language, if he had not some faint conception of a distinction between God and the Spirit, and some small beginning of faith in the personality and divinity of the Spirit, I do not know. How could the good Spirit deal as an instructor with the tribes of Israel, if He was not a person? and how could He carry on the simultaneous instruction of them, if not possessed of omnipresence and other Divine attributes?

It looks as if the Psalmist's inner vision had been strengthened to perceive that Jehovah was not absolutely one in the sense in which he was himself a unit, for we find him thus praying—"Take not thy holy Spirit from me." A petition such as this might have fallen from the lips of a New Testament saint.

The expression—"the Spirit of the Lord"—is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, and what does it mean? Is it merely a periphrasis for *the Lord*? I cannot think so; for, (1.) unlike man, who *has* a spirit, God *is* a

spirit; and, (2.) I cannot persuade myself that when Jesus read the following passage from "the book of the prophet Isaiah"—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor"—He wished those who heard Him to understand that He had been anointed with *God the Father*. As if to prevent the putting of such an interpretation upon it, we are told by St. John that God gave not the Spirit by measure to Christ. The evangelist's words are these,—*"God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him."* And it is pertinent to inquire, Was God both *Giver* and *Gift*? No unprejudiced reader of the Old Testament will aver that in its pages there are no notices whatever of the doctrine of the Trinity; but if a false doctrine, why are there any at all? Moreover, if we take for granted its truth, and that the right time to disclose it was when Christianity was introduced into the world, are not the intimations of it found in the historical, prophetic, and other portions of the Old Testament, very much what might have been expected?

It is a trite remark that the eye sees what it brings with it the power of seeing; and no one can fail to discern shadowy indications of the doctrine of the Trinity, who first fills,

as he should do, the mental eye with it as it shines in the contents of the New Testament. It is admitted that what is ambiguous and obscure in Holy Writ should be interpreted by what is clear and definite; and there can be no question but that the best of all commentaries on the Old Testament is the New Testament. The Old Testament is distinctively the revelation of *God*: the New Testament is as distinctively the revelation of *Christ*. We do not, consequently, possess a distinctive revelation of the Spirit; but that should not occasion either perplexity or regret. The Spirit is not the object of saving faith. Besides, the revelation of the Spirit is involved in the revelation of God and Christ, inasmuch as, if the Old and New Testaments were utterly silent regarding the Spirit, the conclusion would be inevitable that there are but two persons in the constitution of the Godhead. In order, then, that there might be no mistake, the revelation of the divinity of Christ had to be accompanied by the revelation of the divinity of the Spirit; and this is just what has occurred. For whilst we have not a separate revelation of the Spirit, there is abundance of information concerning the Spirit in the two Testaments. Those who hold the

doctrine of the Trinity can the better afford to concede that it is not lucidly and broadly laid down in the Old Testament that it occupies so large and conspicuous a place in the other Testament. The evidence for it is diffused through it, and must be taken up by the mind as a sponge absorbs water. It may be represented as so permeating it that the endeavour to extract it would issue in the shattering of the New Testament. All the passages which either explicitly or implicitly teach the divinity of Christ and of the Spirit would have to be expunged ; and every careful and candid student of the Bible must allow that there is a vast number of them. The impugnors of the doctrine of the Trinity may flatter themselves that to get rid of it they have only to dispose of one class of passages, viz.—those which teach the divinity of the Spirit ; but they are mistaken. After explaining these away as best they can, they must subject to similar treatment those other passages which are generally understood as lending support to the cardinal truth of Christ's divinity, being as unwilling to grant that there are two as that there are three persons in the adorable Godhead.

CHAPTER III.

A SELECTION OF PROOFS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR
THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE
SPIRIT.

It has been computed that in the New Testament alone mention is made of the Spirit close upon three hundred times; and it cannot but be that ample materials are furnished by this far-stretching chain of references for forming a judgment respecting the Spirit's nature, character, and work. To plead ignorance of the Spirit in these circumstances is virtually to incriminate ourselves, unless it can be shown that they are glaringly contradictory, or so enigmatical as to be unintelligible. As regards this heap of references to the Spirit, the intelligibility of the great majority of them turns upon the assumption that the Spirit is a person, and a Divine person; and if this be not the case, it is strange that we should not once be put on our guard against

the association of personality and divinity with the Spirit.

In a small proportion of them the substitution of the phrase "Divine influence" for "the Spirit" would not interfere with the sense. This may readily be allowed. The substituted words might not improve the sense, but they would not perceptibly mar it. We may speak of *resisting* influence, but we cannot with propriety speak of *grieving* and *sinning against* influence. It is not credible that Paul would have exhorted the Ephesian saints to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" if he had entertained the idea that "Holy Spirit" and "Divine influence" were convertible expressions. Whether Christ and the apostles were or were not believers in the personality of the Spirit, it is obvious that they could not have spoken differently about the Spirit from what they do, if they had considered the Spirit a person; and how they are to be defended from the charge of intending to mislead, I must leave it to others to determine.

The arguments by which it is sought to disprove the personality of the Spirit are at our service to disprove the personality of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, James, John, the

angels, Christ, God, and our own personality—universal personality.

A person is "an intelligent subject who can say I, who can be addressed as thou, and who can act and be the object of action;" and, accepting this as an adequate definition, are the personal pronouns applied in the sacred writings to the Spirit? Quite a number of passages might be quoted to prove that they are freely and uniformly applied; but two must suffice. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them:" "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

The latter of these two passages is all the stronger a proof that Christ might have avoided the use of the personal pronoun "He." The Greek word for "spirit" is neuter. Again, are personal acts which imply intelligence, will, and power, attributed to the Spirit? They are, and so constantly that the Spirit appears as a personal agent from beginning to end of the Word of God. He searches, reveals, selects, forbids, calls, witnesses, reproves, strengthens, and sustains relations and performs offices

which none but a person can sustain and perform. He is a teacher, sanctifier, comforter, guide. Who, according to Paul, was it that had made the elders of the Ephesian church "overseers" (bishops)? The Holy Ghost; but Paul would not have said so if there had been any doubt in his mind as to the personality and divinity of the Spirit.

The personality of the Spirit is thus beyond dispute; and His divinity can be as summarily established, and by evidence drawn from the same source. There is but a step betwixt the one truth and the other, and at the present time His personality and divinity are either both affirmed or both denied. Whose book is the Bible? It is the Word of God; but in one of the Epistles it is designated "the sword of the Spirit." The Spirit must, therefore, be God. Peter demanded of Ananias—"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?" and immediately after he solemnly intimated to him that he had not "lied unto man, but unto God." The Spirit must, therefore, be God. These may be termed collateral proofs of the divinity of the Spirit, and others equally convincing might be adduced.

Throughout Scripture the Spirit is brought before us as possessing Divine attributes and

exercising Divine prerogatives. The prophets owed their power of prediction to the Spirit ; but no one knows the future except God. Eternity is ascribed to the Spirit : "The eternal Spirit." So is omnipresence : "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?" Omniscience is ascribed to the Spirit : "The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." And it will not be questioned that the possession of one Divine attribute implies the possession of all Divine attributes. The works of God are ascribed to the Spirit : He fashioned the world, He renews the face of the earth, He is the source of inspiration, He regenerates the heart, He dwells in believers, and He it is that will quicken their mortal bodies. But the works of God would be impossible to the Spirit if His were not a Divine nature. Further, in the formula of baptism and in the apostolic benediction, the Spirit is named along with the Father and the Son ; and I am at a loss to imagine what the object could be, if not to impress us with, and keep us mindful of, the unity and the tri-personality of God.

Now, if the Spirit is a Divine person immense importance must attach to His work ; and it must be for His glory and our benefit, that by earnest, unprejudiced, and prolonged study,

we should gain as thorough a knowledge of it as possible. What is the nature of it? and what is its extent? are questions in which we have a profound personal interest; and they who go "to the law and to the testimony" for light, in reality place themselves as learners at the Spirit's feet, and may expect to be guided to right conclusions.

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT, DISTINCT PERSONS.

IN contending for the equality in substance, power, and glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, there should be no unwillingness on the part of those who accept the Bible as the book of God to concede that, to borrow the language of a modern writer, "each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others." The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Spirit; and not one of the Three is God without the others. The Son's relation to the Father is commonly expressed by the term *filiation*; the Spirit's relation by the term *procession*. Intimation was given to the disciples by Christ that, on His return to heaven, He would send the Spirit; but He never spoke of the Spirit as proceeding from Himself. Neither the sending of the Spirit by Christ, nor His procession from the Father, however, involves the essential inferiority of the Spirit to either

Person. If the sending of the Spirit by Christ did, we should have to admit that the sending of the Son implied His essential inferiority to the Sender; and yet the Gospel according to John thus begins—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There is apparently some kind of subordination among the persons of the Trinity; but it has no reference to essence. It relates to mode of subsistence and operation, and I limit myself the more readily to this proposition, that it has been already shown that the Spirit is as much a Divine person as the Father or the Son. Whatever it be that differentiates Father, Son, and Spirit, they are one in nature, and make one God; and if on this point no light "from above" has come, it behoves us to remain meanwhile contentedly ignorant.

There are things predicated in the Bible of each person of the Godhead which cannot be predicated of the others. We read that "the Word was made (became) flesh." Where is this stated of the Father or the Spirit? If the bringing of salvation within reach of sinners had required that either or both should assume our nature, there is reason to believe that they would have taken it upon

them. The "one in the middle" was not alone capable of the act of incarnation. It may have been peculiarly fitting that the Son should become a partaker of flesh and blood; but this is as far as we should go. His incarnation was doubtless tantamount to the incarnation of the Father and the Spirit, and was in a sense their act.

The Old Testament prophets claimed to be the organs of the Spirit, and the apostles put forth the same claim. We thus owe the Bible to the Spirit. Its contents are designated by Paul, "the things of the Spirit." There is in it a Divine as well as a human element, and according to its own teaching the former element was supplied by the Spirit. By which of the inspired writers are we told that the Bible is Christ's book? It belongs distinctively to the Spirit to glorify Christ by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto us; but this is nowhere represented as the work of Christ, or as work common to Him and the Spirit. It is not even asserted that it belongs to Christ to take of the things of the Spirit, and show them unto men. He does enlighten us with respect to the Spirit; but the Spirit was not the theme of His ministry. He preached Himself, and for this

reason, that the putting away of the world's sin was the distinctive work assigned to Him in the scheme of redemption. It was not the Spirit who gave or sent Christ. It was the Father; but it should be borne in mind that as the Spirit was as willing to come in the plenitude of his influences as the risen and exalted Saviour was to send Him, so Christ was as willing to enter on His mission as the Father was to send Him. The gift of Christ by the Father did not disqualify Him for giving himself. He and the Spirit are alike free-will offerings.

Many are the Divine acts, notwithstanding, which are attributed indifferently to Father, Son, and Spirit in the Scriptures.

It is immaterial whether we use the expression "the Spirit of Christ" or "the Spirit of God." In the Epistles of the New Testament sometimes the one and sometimes the other is employed. Can this fact be fully explained if it be denied that Christ is a Divine person, and that He and the Father are one in substance? Manifestly not. The following passage occurs in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians—"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but

the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all." That this is a noteworthy passage must strike the most cursory reader; but it is such a passage as we might expect, if God is a tri-personal Being. It is noteworthy on this account, that in it, as in Ephesians ii. 18, the three persons of the Trinity are referred to, and in such a manner as to teach their distinctness as persons, and their essential equality and unity. It is of no consequence whether we connect those "spiritual gifts" which were lavished on the early church, and to the exercise of which its marvellous progress was largely due, with the Spirit, or the Lord Jesus, or God the Father; but this could not possibly be said if the Spirit and the Lord be merely aspects, or attributes, or names of the one God, or created personal existences.

It stands written—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and that "all things were made by Him (Christ), and that without Him was not anything made that was made." The creation of the universe is thus attributed to both the Father and the Son. But the act of creation is also ascribed to the Spirit. Speaking of His corporeal frame,

Job says,—“The Spirit of God hath made me;” and in another place he describes the heavens as “garnished by the Spirit?” Thus ran the Angel Gabriel’s message to the Virgin Mary:—“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” In harmony with these quotations are those passages which refer us to the Spirit as the source of all physical energy and intellectual life. Take as specimens:—“I have filled him (Bezaleel) with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him (Othniel), and he judged Israel, and went out to war?” If, then, we are taught in Scripture to regard the universe as originating with the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit, I submit that this proves—(1.) That each of the Three is a Divine person; and, (2.) that they are not Three in the exact sense in which “Noah, Daniel, and Job” were three persons; but that they are one in nature. If these conclusions be not accepted, the charge of self-contradiction stands in full force against the Bible; and what is extraordinary is

that there is no attempt to hide the self-contradiction. If unity of nature cannot be affirmed of Father, Son, and Spirit, and if the first mentioned only is a person, a book claiming to be of Divine origin should restrict itself to stating that it was God the Father who created all things; but it does not. It sets forth Christ as the Creator; it likewise sets forth the Spirit as the Creator; and how it is to be extricated from this pressing difficulty except in the way pointed out, is a problem which the ingenuity of man has not as yet been able to solve.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPIRIT THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GODHEAD.

ACTS requiring omnipotence for their performance are ascribed in such number and variety to the Spirit in God's Word, that it is not surprising that it should have occurred to theologians to define the Spirit as "the power and efficiency of God," or as "the executive of the Godhead."

It is hardly possible to consult all the passages relating to the Spirit in the Bible, and after carefully studying them, object to this language. Instead of asking what has the Spirit done? it is more in accordance with the facts to ask—what has the Spirit not done? The Divine acts are few that are not by one inspired writer or another ascribed to the Spirit, and they often unite in ascribing the same Divine act to the Spirit; but they could not have prevailed on themselves to do this *if the personality and deity of the Spirit had*

not been with them an article of belief. A great mistake, however, would be committed if we were to confound the Spirit with the attribute of power in God, or look on the Spirit as "God in action." To do so would be to import absurdity into several passages, of which two may be cited as specimens—"And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." What could be more inelegant and devoid of all sense than to say "in demonstration of the power and of power," and "through the power of the Holy Power?" But if by the Spirit we understand a Divine Person, no reasonable fault can be found with them on the score of intelligibility. Examples of personification—a figure of speech which consists in enduing inanimate objects, or abstract notions, with the life and action of persons—have a place in the volume of truth; but we are in little danger of mistaking personified objects for actual persons. They occur usually in exciting and elevated discourse, announce themselves, and are soon done with; but if the phrases

“the Spirit” and “the Spirit of God” are to be interpreted as a figure of speech for the power of God, the personification in this instance is carried a monstrous length. It is found incorporated with ordinary narrative, incidental conversation, and processes of argumentation—running through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; but is it likely or credible that authors living at periods so widely apart, and surrounded by different circumstances, would follow one another in habitually personifying the power of God, or any other Divine attribute? It is exceedingly improbable—unbelievable—that they would conspire to make their notices of the Spirit one vast personification of the power of God. There can be no objection to speaking of the Spirit as the executive of the Godhead; but we should hold by it as a clearly revealed truth, that the Spirit is a Divine Person. Scripture shuts us up to this view, and on the assumption that the Spirit is a subsistent of the blessed Trinity, He must be by His very nature a *worker*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPIRIT ESSENTIALLY ACTIVE.

MAN is a person, and his is an active nature. He was made to work, and he cannot bear to be idle. There may be in him an aversion to some, but not to all kinds of work. He is slandered when he is described as naturally indolent. It would be unaccountable if he were, for employment is necessary to development and happiness. Continued existence is conditional on the use of his bodily and mental powers. If he were to renounce working it would not be long till the earth would be "rolling round the sun one vast sepulchre," and it could not be alleged that the race had "died by the visitation of God." There is no likelihood of this ever happening. Man is in his element working, as birds are in their element flying through the air, and fish are in their element swimming in sun-lit brooks and rivers; and he is the more alive to the value and virtue of doing that no one was ever known

to pillow his head on the Delilah-lap of indolence without losing his locks—*i.e.*, his strength, and being speedily set to work. In strictness of speech, it is only persons—living beings on whom the God-like gifts of intelligence and free-will have been conferred—that can act. Fire and frost do not act. Laws do not act. Animals do not act. Some of them do work for man, but they serve him not of choice, but as the result of being directed and controlled. If the horse were left to itself, it would and could do nothing worthy of the name of work. Agency is peculiar to man, and peculiar to him because he is so different from the lower animals, that a wide impassable gulf may be said to stretch between him and them; and he has been placed by his all-wise Creator under the law of work. There is plenty of work for him to do; he can set various ends before him, and employ means to gain them; and it is the will of God that he should constantly and vigorously exert the faculties with which he has been endowed, and reap manifold benefits. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work;" and it is those that obey the command who are entitled to a rest-day, and to whom the Sabbath is

"The couch of time, care's balm and bay."

Man's hand is deep in the external world,—far deeper than is realised. It is enormous the amount of work which has been accomplished since “the grand old gardener and his wife” were driven from the lovely Eastern enclosure which God devolved it on them to “dress and keep ;” and still there is work for man to do—more and better work than he is willing to undertake. We may be threatened with a dearth of coal, and other necessities and luxuries, but a dearth of work has not begun to stare us in the face. We ought to bless God that material things are perishable in their nature, and susceptible of indefinite improvement. One proof that the great mysterious Being who created man created all things is this—the provision that has been made for the gratification and play, age after age, of the powers of his complex constitution. Individuals and communities get from God every encouragement “to labour and to wait;” and a radical change will have to pass over man before he will cease to work. It is the nature of persons to be up and doing. Wilberforce's highest conception of heaven was expressed by the word *love*, R. Hall's by *rest*; but what do we mean when we talk of heaven as a place of rest? That its inhabitants will

do literally nothing? That would not be an attractive picture of heaven. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest (a Sabbatism) for the people of God;" but the peculiarity of the Sabbath is that it is a day unvexed by "servile work." There will be work in heaven, but no servile work—hard, painful, unprofitable toil. It is in the grave that "the wicked cease from troubling," and that "the weary are at rest." Heaven differs from earth in this respect, that it is full of *holy* activity. It is *balanced* working that is carried on within its bounds. The work that goes on in it is unattended by anxiety, fear, and exhaustion. It is work which refreshes, strengthens, makes "beautiful for ever," and yields ever-increasing enjoyment. The brightness of the angelic ranks comes of their diligent spirit and manners; and there is not one sluggard among them. Their industrious lives give point to John Foster's remark, that "power to its last particle is duty." Their ambition, if they have experience of such a spirit, and if such a thing could be, is to "spend and be spent" for God. His will being law with them, it is a joy to them "to stand and wait," when it is God's good pleasure that they should; but we may be permitted to believe that they have special delight in active service. The

tasks which He appoints them are never felt to be irksome, and are welcome in proportion to their importance. Be the points of difference between one angel and another, and one order and another, what they may, the angels are alike in this—that they revel in the forth-putting of their mighty energies. Does the universe contain a solitary person that is not a worker? The high probability is that it does not. What about the insatiate archer of hell with his quiver of fire-tipt arrows? There are no Sundays or holidays in his life. The Apostle Peter likens the devil to a hungry, prowling, roaring lion. He has no fixed locality. “Whence comest thou? From going to and fro.” He is restless—cannot rest; for—(1.) His nature rebels against inactivity, and he has no power to alter it. (2.) Work has become with him an inveterate habit. At war with his own nature and the God of nature, he may devote himself to the search for rest, but all his efforts will be vain. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,” are words as applicable to him and his rebellious following, as they are to the wicked ones of earth. Though he and they can gain nothing by their activity, they have been active ever since their fall, and active they will continue for

evermore. To annihilate them is the worst use to which God could put them, and their annihilation would wear the aspect of a confession of defeat.

Now, if all orders of finite beings give themselves to work, can it be that the persons of the Godhead are not active, in ways and on a scale becoming to their Divine nature? God's action conditions that of all His creatures; and of Him Christ testifies—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He might have added, "And the Spirit works." Time was when Michael the Archangel was not. There was a time when he of whom it is asserted that he *sinneth* from the beginning was not; but there never was a time when the Spirit was not, and was not active. When there was no star to brighten the blue depths of space, the Spirit was living and active. The three persons of the Trinity are fit society for, and ceaselessly active in relation to, each other; and what was the calling into existence of the spacious universe, but the providing of a theatre for the display of their perfections? It is a magnificent field of action for them; and if God takes, and must take, to do with it, why should the Son and the Spirit be less interested in it, or take a less active part than the Father in the

preservation, education, training, and government of persons and things?

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPIRIT'S QUALITY AS A WORKER.

How should the contemplation of the essential activity of the Spirit affect us? That will depend on the Spirit's *quality* as a worker. Tried, then, by a moral rather than an intellectual standard, what kind of a worker is the Spirit? To the brief consideration of this question I would now address myself.

There are wise and foolish workers—workers of iniquity and workers of righteousness—and to which class does the Spirit belong? That will turn mainly on the *character* which the Spirit possesses.

I qualify the averment by the insertion of the adverb “mainly,” because it happens occasionally that persons of excellent character fall into errors of judgment, and unwittingly do considerable harm. The consequences of their activity are not always such as they themselves approve of. It is their knowledge that is at fault; but it may be laid down as a rule, that as is the character of an agent, so is his

work. Is the man wise, benevolent, righteous? His work partakes of the moral qualities of wisdom, benevolence, and righteousness. Is he the opposite? His work expresses, and is marred by the opposite qualities. Moral character in a person corresponds to *nature* in a tree; and a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit for the same reason that a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit. From the cruel we expect cruelty; from the proud and ambitious we expect pride and ambition; from the truthful, the honest, the merciful, we expect truth, honesty, and mercy, and we are never disappointed. When a man's works are morally bad—intentionally so—we set him down as bad; and all the logic in the world is insufficient to shake the conviction. For the time being he was bad, else how came he to speak bad words and do bad acts?

Now, of what sort is the Spirit's character? Is it good or bad? If good, is it relatively or absolutely good? It must be the latter, for it has been demonstrated that He is a Divine person. To prove that He is the equal of the Father and the Son in nature is equivalent to proving that He is their equal in moral character; and the absolute goodness of God the Father is part of the teaching of Christ;

"There is none good but one, God." The possession of an angelic nature does not imply an angelic character. There are angels both of darkness and of light; but the possession of a Divine nature does imply a character divinely good. As one of the persons of the Trinity, therefore, the Spirit is possessed of all Divine attributes, natural and moral. Is the Father free? So is the Spirit. "Uphold me with thy free (willing) Spirit?" Is the Father wise? The Spirit is the same. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"—Father, Son, and Spirit. Is the Father just and impartial? tender, condescending, and patient? "slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy?" "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" So is the Spirit; and this is the kind of character with which the Old and New Testament writers invest Him. They do not deal in superlatives—a circumstance indicative of the reality of their inspiration. They describe him as "the Holy Ghost," and as "the Spirit of Holiness;" and if infinitely holy, we have no alternative but to believe that He is "holy in all His works," and that in the goings forth of His activity His paramount desire and object is the maintenance and diffusion of holiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAN'S DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT.

IF the heathen have not, generation after generation, perished miserably, there must be groups of persons here and there on the way to heaven whose names appear not on the communion-roll of any church—who have no right to be called Christians, and who know nothing of Jesus Christ or “the Spirit of grace.” Now, what is their relation to the Spirit? Are they debtors to Him for what they are in moral state and character? No one who has noted with any degree of care what is taught in Scripture concerning the Spirit and His work will answer this question in the negative. If we trace what of truth and goodness exists in civilised and Christian countries to the Spirit, why should we not trace to His agency what of truth and good-

ness exists in heathendom? If there were truth and goodness anywhere with which the Spirit had nothing to do, what warrant should we have for roundly speaking of Him as "the Spirit of truth" and "the Spirit of holiness?"

God the Father and Christ the Son divide *inspired* doxologies between them; but salvation is not of them to the exclusion of the Spirit. Each of the Three is concerned in the important business of the soul's salvation; and on this ground alone they are entitled to praise. There should be no hesitation in singing this uninspired doxology—

" To the great Godhead—Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in one,
Be glory, praise, and honour given
By all on earth, and all in Heaven."

The dependence of sinners on the Spirit is as complete as their dependence on the Father and the Son, and should be as heartily acknowledged. We owe it to Christ that there is for us an open door into heaven; but if the Spirit were to refuse to have dealings with us, it might as well have remained closed. He prepares, and takes credit for preparing, for heaven all who are admitted into it; and the

Spirit would have claims on some which He had not on others, if a proportion of "the redeemed from among men" could say that they had reached it, and become meet for its society and employments, independently of the Spirit. Differ as they may in knowledge and spiritual attainments, the obligations of the whole "sacramental host of God's elect" to the Spirit are such that eternity will be too short for their discharge. If under Christianity His influences cannot be dispensed with, how can they be dispensed with in less favoured circumstances? Only to the extent that men are favoured with the Spirit's ministrations are they in a salvable condition; and it should encourage and gladden us to be told that the Spirit is perfection as a worker. His work as distinguished from that of the Son is to reveal the truth which sinners need to know, induce them to receive it, and reduce it to practice; and He is not to blame when sinners pass away unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Their unfitness arises from resisting the Spirit, without whose help salvation is impossible, and on whom we are dependent for a knowledge of the truth as brought to a diamond point in the gospel, or a knowledge of Christ, as

Paul expressly teaches in 1 Cor. xii. 3,—
“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

The apostle is not satisfied with telling us that no man *will*, but that no man *can* say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. In 1 John iv. 1, 2,—“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”—the writer furnishes, according to Bengel, a test of truth *against the Jews*; in the passage quoted above, Paul furnishes a test of truth *against the Gentiles*. Heathen priests and priestesses might pretend to inspiration and the power of working miracles; but Paul directs that they should not be listened to, if they joined anathema with the name Jesus. Their doing so was an indubitable proof that they were not influenced by the Spirit of God. For any one to call Jesus accursed was to contradict the apostles, for they called Him *blessed*. For any one to call

Jesus accursed was to contradict God himself, for He spoke from the opened heavens of Jesus as His beloved Son, and testified that with him He was well pleased. To vary the declaration—for any one to call Jesus accursed is to contradict the Spirit, for the Bible, which is the Spirit's own book, speaks of Christ in loftiest terms of praise. It raises Him to the level of God the Father. All who have the Spirit in them, and who in their speech and conduct are guided by the Spirit, think and speak well of Christ. They glory in Him as their Saviour. They confide in and love Him; and their whole action toward Him indicates that they view Him as their Lord and Master, as having the right and the power to rule them, to judge and dispose of them, and that they consider it their duty to do whatsoever He commands. It never occurs to them to set their wills in opposition to His will; and to whom do they owe it that they look on Him as Highest and Best? They owe it, Paul being witness, to the Spirit of God. He is the Revealer of Christ, and He it is who prevails on sinners to put themselves in a right relation to Him as "the Captain of Salvation." In Paul we have one who, so far from calling Jesus accursed, said with an emphasis which

could not be mistaken, that Jesus was the Lord—the name which in the Septuagint is the equivalent for Jehovah ; and by whom was he brought to this conclusion ? By the Holy Ghost. In Peter we have another specimen. When the question was put by Jesus to the disciples, “ Whom say ye that I am ? ” Peter answered, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ” And his reply forms an admirable comment on the expression—“ Jesus is the Lord. ” His answer gave joy to Christ. He could not refrain from solemnly congratulating Peter on the elevation of view which he had been sweetly constrained to take, and He traced it to its real source in God. Peter had not slowly and painfully, by the unassisted use of his own mental faculties, attained to a saving knowledge of Christ ; but the heavenly Father had imparted it to him by the agency of the Holy Spirit. “ Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ” Before we can say in any practical and proper sense that Jesus is the Lord, we must know who and what He is ; and before we can know Him whom to know, with the Father, is eternal life, the Spirit must do what He is every way competent to do, and what He

delights to do—take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, which is the part that belongs to Him in the redemptive economy; so that our dependence on the Holy Spirit for salvation and a knowledge of Christ is no mere supposition, but an actual reality.

Impersonal, dependent, limited, and subject to change as nature is, we cannot rest in the belief that it is self-existent, or that it has existed from all eternity. It must, therefore, be an effect, and it has all the marks of an effect. From this it follows, since every effect must have a cause, that it must have had a cause, and an adequate cause. Now, who created the vast system of things of which we and the world are small but valuable parts? It was God; and when we name God we specify an adequate cause, as He is commonly conceived and defined. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—the universe. In the Bible creation is again and again attributed to Christ. He is spoken of as creating and upholding all things by the word of His power; and this ought not to astonish us when we note the prominence which is given in it to the doctrine of His divinity. Do the works of creation and pro-

vidence, then, reveal Jesus? They afford a demonstration of the existence of God, and a sublime manifestation of His wisdom, holiness, and love; but they do not reveal Jesus. They have not one ray of light to shoot forth in His direction, as distinguished from the other persons of the Godhead. The heathen are as truly in contact with them as we are, but they are profoundly ignorant of Jesus. They are strangers to His very name. Missionaries do not make what would be to them a glad discovery when they penetrate into heathen regions, and settle among the inhabitants for the purpose of introducing the arts of civilisation, and communicating to them a knowledge of the Gospel, that in some mysterious manner they have been anticipated in their mission-work. When they talk to them about Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, they are not startled to find that the objects of their Christian solicitude know as much, or nearly as much, about Jesus as they do themselves. They find what they expected to find, that they are in a state of absolute ignorance with regard to Jesus and all that endears Him to the Christian heart. Their ignorance does not prove that the Holy Spirit is unconcerned about them, or that there is no truth

which He can bring to bear upon them, or that they lie beyond the sphere of His operations, or that in His strivings with them He entirely fails; but it exists, and must be recognised as existing. They may have turned their eyes upward in their weary wanderings and scanned the heavens, stolen looks at the sun shining in his strength, and watched the devious motions of the fleecy clouds; they may have gazed wonderingly at the moon walking in brightness, and the vast starry concave; they may have mused on the works of nature surrounding them, and have dived into the recesses of their own being; and they may have learned something, but what has the study of themselves and things above and around them done for them as regards a knowledge of Christ? Nothing; and in this respect there is no difference between the heathen of our day and the millions of heathen who have found their last level, the grave. Jesus is not known, loved, and obeyed, save in those countries in which the Bible circulates, and is statedly expounded. He is not revealed in any aspect except in the pages of the written Word; and they who would acquire a knowledge of Him have no choice but to devote

themselves to what ought not to be felt to be a task by any who know that they have sinned and need salvation,—searching that book which has been eloquently described as “a field without a fence, a garden of knowledge and of life, at whose gates no flaming sword forbids an entrance.” Well, whose book is the Bible? It is the invaluable gift of the Holy Spirit. It consists of the compositions of a great variety of human writers; but who furnished them with the thoughts and facts to which they give expression? To answer this query for the prophets is a virtual answering of it for the evangelists and the apostles; and Peter declares of the prophet-class that they “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Verily Christ himself received a singularly rich and overflowing baptism of the Spirit to qualify Him for His life-work; and, speaking in name of that “glorious company” of which he was so conspicuous a member, Paul says,—“Which things (the things of the Gospel) also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” If, then, Jesus is revealed nowhere but in the Bible, and we have in the Bible the voice and mind of the Spirit, it must be true that man is dependent on the Holy

Spirit for a saving acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not, however, the whole truth about man's dependence on the Spirit to assert that we are indebted to the Spirit for a revelation of Jesus. The Spirit does, and needs to do, a great deal more for sinners. If without the shedding of blood sin could have been remitted, and the soul redeemed from all iniquity, not a drop would have been spilt to "make us gay and fit for paradise." "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;" and if sinners could have been saved without the Spirit, there would have been no effusion of His influences. The necessity for them is implied in the bestowment of them. Morally considered, the world is in a dark, chaotic, wretched state, and it has always had the Spirit of God brooding over it, and exerting Himself to bring order and beauty out of it. The Spirit was associated in the mind of Christ with regeneration as its efficient cause; and Paul labels love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, as "the fruit of the Spirit." These clusters of beautiful fruit grow upon Christians; but the Spirit's relation to them is

analogous to the air, rain, and sunshine, without which natural trees would bring forth neither leaves nor fruit.

“ And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone,”

CHAPTER IX.

A KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE
TRINITY NOT CONDITIONAL ON THE RISE
OF SIN.

THE entrance of sin into the world is extensively regarded as the Providential occasion of the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity. With this view, however, I am not able to sympathise; and to produce instinctive recoil from it, the matter has only to be put thus—“But for sin the exact and full truth about God would never have become known.” I cannot believe that, if man had so acted as to change the white robe of innocence, in which, at his creation, he was arrayed by the Maker’s hand, into the rainbow-coloured garment of personal righteousness, we, and the angels too, would have been kept, millennium after millennium, in ignorance of the fact that there are distinctions in the Divine nature. I concur with those who think that it would have

been unspeakably better if sin had not sprung into existence. Where sin is "there is confusion, and every evil work." If sin can be made out to be a "blessing in disguise," it is to me inexplicable that Father, Son, and Spirit should have, as it were, gone out of their way to lay an arrest upon it. God has a perfect hatred of it, and His attitude toward it indicates the sincerest antagonism.

There can be no question but that the incarnation was occasioned by the introduction of sin. In what capacity was Christ here? We have the answer in John the Baptist's memorable and directive exclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away (expiateth) the sin of the world." The only begotten Son was among us on a sacrificial errand. The reason assigned by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews for His participation in flesh and blood is, that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." This declaration is excellently paraphrased by St. John in these words—"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." From this, and kindred passages, it is evident that the occasion of the incarnation was not any crav-

ing in man for a visible object of worship, but the outbreak of sin. But are we to suppose that, if man had not fallen into a state of sin, the second and third persons of the Godhead would have had to remain hidden and inactive—unknown and unknowable? No countenance should be given to any such idea. Was Christ's life, was the Spirit's life an utter blank previous to the violation of the Edenic law? Their action, and consequent manifestation, were surely not conditional on wrong being done in some province of the intelligent moral universe. There is much in the gospel to suggest that with both divisions of the angels—the fallen and the unfallen—the Trinity is a familiar truth. It must be the wish of God that those creatures which it has seemed good to Him to model after Himself, should have a true conception of His nature as well as His character; but have they a true conception of God who entertain the belief that He is one in the sense in which individually we are one? If tri-personality is affirmable of God, it cannot be well that the reason-and-will-endowed portion of the creation should be denied all opportunity of becoming acquainted with the fact. It would look suspicious if the knowledge of it were designedly kept from men and angels;

and if there is a "need be" for the revelation of it, the possibility of it is involved in the infinite power and wisdom of God. Assuming that there are three persons in the Godhead, it is difficult to see how the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity can be prevented. Special means would have to be adopted to conceal it. The Father is essential activity. So is the Son, and so is the Spirit; and if the sphere of the Father embraces the universe, why should not the respective spheres of the Son and the Spirit also embrace it?

In representing the "Sacred Three" as essentially active, I do not mean that they are simply active in relation to each other; but that the objects and affairs of the universe engage, and have always engaged, their attention and activities. There are other economies besides the one which we name redemption; and it is reasonable to think that from none of them is the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit absolutely excluded. In reference to each of them they can say, "Our economy," otherwise we must come to the conclusion that the economy of redemption is an exception to the rule. If Father, Son, and Spirit are interested in, and concerned with the world as fallen, we may argue that they would have

felt an adequate interest in it, and concerned themselves with it, if it had not deviated from, but had elected to pursue the straight, sunny, and ascending path of obedience to the will of its Divine Creator and Proprietor.

The fall into sin of the first human pair was not owing to the withholdment of the Spirit from them, or His sudden withdrawal after He had been bestowed. It would be a reflection on God to assert that it was. Temptation assailed them, but it did not carry them away as with a flood. They yielded to it, and in yielding they resisted the Spirit; for, Jesus being witness, He is "the Spirit of truth." In this title there seems to me to be a linking on of the Spirit to all truth.

As the Mosaic dispensation had its day, so the Christian system will have its day. It is God's last best dispensation of a remedial kind; but the preaching of the Gospel will not continue for ever. Probation will issue in retribution. There is a judgment to come; and when "the broken wheels of time give place to round eternity," will the activity of Christ and the Spirit relative to creatures come to an end? Will they feel that they have survived all work? that they have no more to do with *the different orders of moral intelligences?*

Let who will believe it, I can't. Temples of the Holy Ghost on earth, much more will the redeemed be His temples in heaven. I know no heresy to compare with this—that the love and help of Father, Son, and Spirit are confined to human beings while under the scheme of redemption, and in the thick of the fight with temptation and sin. Those in whom sanctification has had its perfect work cannot dispense with the Spirit's aid, and never will be independent of it; and if not, it would be mysterious if it were withheld from them. They are the objects of the Spirit's complacency, and if, during the period of probation, the Spirit helps sinners whom He pities, *a fortiori* He will help those in whom He takes pleasure, wherever they may be, and in whatever circumstances they may be placed.

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRIT'S PART IN THE ECONOMY OF
REDEMPTION.

THE ideas to which I have given expression in the chapter immediately preceding, may be deemed somewhat speculative; but if not definitely set forth in the Bible, they are fairly deducible from it, and their practical importance is self-evident.

This much is certain, that Father, Son, and Spirit, have each a place and a part to perform in the economy of redemption. Not that too rigid a line should be drawn between the work of the Father, and the work of the Son or the Spirit. In comparing one's official work with another's, the unity of essence underlying the threefold personality should not be permitted to drop out of sight. The recognition of their essential oneness serves to keep us within the lines of revelation, and

has great explaining power as regards many portions of it.

It pertains to the Father to hear and answer prayer, to grant the forgiveness of sins, to reward the followers of that which is good, and punish the doers of evil; in a word, to sustain the rights of Deity.

The procuring, by submission to suffering and death, of the benefits of redemption for a ruined world was the part undertaken by the Son; and by the glorious fulfilment thereof, He has qualified himself for the office of permanently mediating between God and sinful men.

The office of the Spirit may be described, in general terms, as the application of the benefits of redemption to the souls of those for whom they have been procured; and of His perfect fitness for its exercise, all must be convinced who hold that the Spirit is as Divine in character as He is in nature.

The benefits of redemption are ordinarily represented as consisting of pardon, justification, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, and ultimate glorification. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is sufficiently so for our purpose; and in the enumeration of them respect has been paid to the order in which

—

they are realised in the experience of those on whom they are conferred. That it is the wish and will of the Holy Spirit that sinners should be brought into the enjoyment of all that comes under the head of salvation may be taken for granted. Their objective existence gives us the assurance that the enjoyment of them by sinners is what the Father and the Son wish and will; and it will not be urged that there is want of harmony on any subject among the persons of the Godhead. The Bible knows nothing of a divided Godhead. They make a virtual and too successful attack on the doctrine of the Trinity who deny that the salvation of sinners is with the Spirit an object of real and intense desire; for Peter says,—“The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Paul says,—“Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” These plain passages are decisive as to the wish and will of God and Christ, and, therefore, as to the wish and will of the Spirit; for among the subsistents of the Godhead, there is not the shadow of dissension. Further, we could not continue to believe in the absolute benevolence and holiness of the Spirit, if it could be established

that He is opposed to the enjoyment by any sinner on the surface of the globe of the benefits of redemption. In the breathing forth of this prayer—"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved"—did Paul ask for what was not "according to the will" of the Spirit? If he had thought so, or been in doubt on the point, he would have suppressed it altogether; but it is incredible that the Spirit would awaken in the heart of Paul, or in the souls of Christians as a class, a desire with which He has Himself no sympathy. 'Tis no more than justice to the Spirit to say, that if the converted desire the salvation of sinners indiscriminately, He desires it with inconceivably greater intensity. Since there are no limits to the love and holiness of the Spirit, it must be His wish and will that sinners should, and on as large a scale as possible, partake of the blessings which the Son of God was sent into the world to procure, and did procure, for the entire race. This inference thrusts itself upon us; and if it is the wish and will of the Spirit that mankind sinners should enjoy the benefits of redemption, we may be certain that whatever can be done to save them is done, and in a manner worthy

of His Divine nature and character. What can be more agreeable to the Spirit of love and holiness, than work which has for its object the lifting of sinners above the sin and misery in which they have become involved?

CHAPTER XI.

REGENERATION* NOT EFFECTED BY A TOUCH
OF THE FINGER OF OMNIPOTENCE, OR NOT
PRIOR TO, AND INDEPENDENT OF, FAITH
IN THE GOSPEL.

IN seeking, then, the deliverance of sinners from guilt and woe, how does the Spirit proceed? What is the *nature* of the influence which He exerts? In changing their hearts, does He act directly and omnipotently upon them, or does He restrict himself to the use of moral and resistible means?

It is held and taught on every side that regeneration goes before faith, and that it is as really the effect of omnipotence as the creation of matter or the raising of the dead to life; but such views do not commend themselves to us as either rational or scriptural. Our opposition is all the stronger that they strike us as pernicious in the extreme, and that their adoption would put it out of our

power to answer, as we would wish to do, this question—Why are there unregenerate sinners in the world? I go further: their adoption would lay us under the necessity of throwing the blame on God, seeing that only He possesses omnipotence. It may be said that, while regeneration is the effect of omnipotence pure and simple, it is conditional on prayer; but the remark carries no weight with it, for this reason, that it cannot be reconciled with a statement which the advocates of regeneration before faith are never tired of making—viz., that an unregenerate sinner is incapable of, and utterly indisposed to the performance of so much as one good act. If it be insisted on that he can pray himself into a regenerate state, what is to hinder him from believing himself into a regenerate state? Is prayer so very easy, and faith in the Gospel so very difficult, that the one act can be performed but not the other?

To one accustomed to hear faith spoken of as the simplest of all mental acts, it sounds strange to hear it asserted that the unregenerate can read the Bible, attend church, and pray, but not believe the Gospel-message. Given that sinners are as helpless as so many corpses with regard to what is good, and that

they cannot be regenerated except by an act of bare omnipotence, it must be God's fault that all are not the subjects of regeneration. But He is the last person whom we should think of blaming; and hence I cannot assent to it that regeneration precedes Faith, or that it is the result of the direct forth-putting of the Divine almightiness. If God had but to say,—“Let sinners by the million be henceforth regenerate,” how soon the world's salvation would be an accomplished fact! We have His own word for it—oath for it—that He has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked;” and it is God who pathetically cries after His swift-retreating children, “Why will ye die?” This is another of His questions—“What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” And it would not be hard to tell, if, to bring it about, He has but to will the regeneration of sinners.

The doctrine of regeneration before faith is most in favour with those who have imbibed false notions on the subject of human depravity, and closely related subjects. If it could be proved, which it cannot, that holiness is a kind of palace-prison, and that sin is a species of iron Vice, I should perhaps feel less repugnance than I do to the idea that regeneration

is anterior to faith. What is sin? It is not, and it does not spring from, any defect in the constitution of our minds; but is correctly defined in the Shorter Catechism as "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." It is from its nature a voluntary act. It is a wrong act of choice; and the worlds of matter and mind are crowded with what may become objects of choice. There can be neither holiness nor sin where there is not freedom of choice.

Now, if it was not necessary that God should touch with the finger of omnipotence the angels and our first parents, and change them before they could leave off doing good and commit sin, how will it be shown to be necessary that He should touch sinners with that same finger, and change them before they can leave off doing evil and begin to do good? A free agent, in the midst of appropriate surroundings, can do either good or evil, as he may determine; and if God had intended at any stage in his history to ignore or override man's free agency, He would never have endowed him with it. When it is the accomplishment of strictly moral ends (and is not regeneration such an end?) that is sought, intellectual and physical means are equally

inapplicable; moral means alone are suitable, or have the requisite adaptation; and it is almost superfluous to observe that they exclude the bringing to bear immediately of omnipotence—mere sheer power.

If the doctrine under discussion were contained in the Word of God, it would be incumbent upon us to receive it, and wait for more light; but I am not aware of the existence of a single passage which, when rightly interpreted, gives it any support. There is no question as to the omnipotence of the Spirit, or as to the Author of the change known as regeneration. The Spirit is the efficient cause of it. The question is this—Does the Spirit in effecting it dispense with moral means, that is, operate immediately and omnipotently on the heart? I for my part contend that it is not effected by a direct act of physical energy, and that it does not take place independently of faith, and in order to it. Writing to the Corinthians Paul says,—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” If the doctrine of regeneration before faith be taught anywhere in Scripture, it is taught in 1. Cor. ii. 14; but is it actually taught? I

answer—(1.) If it be, it is taught only by implication. It is not explicitly affirmed; it is only inferred. We arrive at the knowledge of it circuitously. Thus—If the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, God, by the exercise of omnipotence, must change the natural man into a spiritual man.

(2.) I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion that neither the doctrine, nor anything akin to it, is taught in the passage. It is to be explained on the same principle as Rom. viii. 7—"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." I daresay not, *whilst it continues carnal*. Night cannot become day, and at the same time remain night. The carnal mind *as the carnal mind*, antagonises Divine authority and law; but it may cease from its carnality, or minding of the flesh. This is its duty, and consciousness testifies that in ten thousand instances the carnal mind has given place, and not at the expense of moral freedom, to the right kind of mind—the spiritual mind. He whose hand is full of sand must empty it before he can fill it with sugar. The carnal mind is a disgrace and curse to its possessor; but how could it be this, if it were true that it works under the law

of necessity? We neither praise the sun for shining nor blame the storm for uprooting trees and strewing the shore with wrecks; and the reason is obvious. Similarly, the natural man *as the natural man*, receiveth not the things of the Spirit. So long as a man is "animal-like"—governed by his senses, and lives but for the gratification of his appetites and passions—he cannot have any relish for things distinctively spiritual. He can neither know nor receive them. How can he feel and act spiritually—like those in whom spiritual life has been implanted—until he is in possession of this species of life? To use the Saviour's illustration—How can a tree bad in its nature bring forth good fruit? It is a natural impossibility; and the other is, if I may so express it, a moral impossibility—the kind of impossibility before the mind of Christ when He asked,—“How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?” But is there anything within or without the natural man to prevent him from ceasing to be natural and becoming spiritual? There is not, because what he is as a natural man he is by his own choice. He may be, and is spiritually dead. He may be, and is the servant, the

slave of sin ; but is he so spiritually dead, and so enslaved by sin, that, with all the help Heaven graciously affords him, he cannot hear the Gospel when it is preached, or that he cannot examine and appreciate the evidence on which it rests, or that he cannot receive it, and resolve to live agreeably to it? A thousand times no. A state of sin and a sinful character are compatible with the performance of innumerable acts. The great Teacher once demanded of the Jews,—“And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” and the question has lost neither its freshness nor its point. Sinners can and should believe the Gospel when it is proclaimed in their hearing ; and what if it should turn out that faith in it is the condition of regeneration, and the truth of the Gospel the means, in the hands of “the Spirit of truth,” for its accomplishment?

The sanctified in Christ Jesus at Corinth were viewed by Paul as standing to himself in a filial relation. He warned them as his “beloved sons,” and told them that “though they might have ten thousand instructors, yet they had not many fathers.” How was this? Observe his own explanation:—“For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the Gospel*.” He had begotten them, not efficiently, but

instrumentally. But could this happen if regeneration—the birth from above—be effected by the power of the Spirit apart altogether from means, or independently of faith in the Gospel? The idea is plainly inadmissible that he was associated with God in an act of omnipotence. Assume, however, that the instrument of their regeneration was the truth of the Gospel, and that a radical moral change took place in connection with faith in it, and is it any wonder that Paul, to whom the Corinthian saints were indebted for what knowledge they had of the truth about Christ's love and propitiation, should have presented himself to them as their spiritual father? Paul's conception of regeneration is very different from theirs who represent it as going before faith, and as the effect of a direct Divine volition; and these words—"In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through (by means of) the Gospel"—are amply sufficient of themselves to convince those who hold the doctrine of regeneration before faith of its untenableness.

There is need for regeneration—a complete change of heart. It is our duty as sinners to become morally and radically different from what we are; and no being except

the Holy Spirit can kindle in the cold, dark, desecrated sanctuary of the heart supreme love to God. But if we are to be made spiritually new, we must get into union with Christ by faith. The Gospel must come between us and the Spirit; and if our hearts be still unchanged, it is because we have refused to make self-application of "the truth as it is in Jesus." Mr. Spurgeon is right:—"Sin cannot be taken out of men as Eve was taken out of the side of Adam when fast asleep."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPIRIT UNDER THE ASPECT OF "ANOTHER COMFORTER," AND TRUTH HIS GRAND INSTRUMENT.

THE facts of Christ's life offer no contradiction to His sayings. If we take "I seek not mine own glory" as a specimen of the sayings, they furnish the amplest justification of the statement. He was completely free from the taint of selfishness; He had no interests separate from those of the Father; and He could not have been a more loving, faithful, and obedient son than He was. The Father's honour was dearer to Him than life itself, and to do His will was "meat and drink"—a spiritual refreshment and joy. His acts and words all tended to exalt the Father in the thoughts and affections of men. If we were to close the ear to the voices of others, and open it to His voice only, how lofty, consistent, spiritual, comforting, sanctifying, and satisfying would be our views of the Father's

nature and character! Jesus shrank not from saying—putting Himself first—"I and my Father are one;" and yet at a later period of His ministry He testified—"My Father is greater than I"—meaning, as the context shows, greater in *condition*. With singleness of eye He aimed at glorifying the Father; and He might well feel sure that the Spirit would glorify Him, for He glorified the Spirit.

He is much more communicative regarding the Spirit and His work than any of the New Testament writers; and His teaching concerning the Spirit carries us, as with the force of a resistless current, onward to the conclusion that the Spirit is a Divine person. Unless His object had been to deceive, He could not have expressed Himself as He does when speaking of the Spirit, if He had conceived of the Spirit as inferior either to Himself or the Father.

He had been a Comforter to the disciples, and He gave them to understand that the blank which His departure would create would be filled up, and in one sense more than filled up, by the Spirit. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall send you *another Comforter*." The word in the original would be better rendered *Helper*—"another Helper."

I prefer helper, because help may take a variety of forms, the form of comfort included. It gives greater breadth to the Spirit's work: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." If, after hearing that "another Comforter" was going to be sent to take Christ's place, the disciples believed that the promised successor would be equal to Christ, who could blame them? He did not mean them so to understand Him, but it seems as if He had deemed the Spirit superior to Himself, and His presence with them as of more importance than His own. Their fear was that in the going away of Christ they were about to sustain irreparable loss; but He did not share it. He tried to convince them that His absence would be gain, and not loss. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter (helper) will not come unto you (in increased efficiency); but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." It had been expedient for them that He should appear in the world and do His own special work; but now that the work of atonement and revelation by sight and example was on the eve of completion, it was expedient—for their advantage that He should reassume the glory which He had with

the Father before the world was. And what made it expedient?—(1.) His resurrection and ascension were necessary to the completing of the evidence of His Messiahship, and all that was involved in it, and the rounding of the circle of evangelical truth. He came *to be* rather than *to preach* the Gospel; and it was not till “the consenting heavens had received Him out of sight, without a sound to break the awful stillness,” that it could be fittingly proclaimed in all its simplicity and power. (2.) The Spirit would be with them in the world, in His own proper nature, and unfettered by human conditions. But if Jesus had not thought of the Spirit as a Divine person, it would have been a piece of deception on His part to have assured the sorrowing disciples, with every indication of honesty and sympathy, that it was expedient for themselves that He should make room for the Spirit. It was like Christ who, first and last, was beautifully self-oblivious thus to address them:—“It is expedient for you that I go away.” Hard as they must have found it to believe the kindly meant assertion, He never would have used the word “expedient” if it had been matter of knowledge with Him that the Spirit was a mere creature; and earlier in the same

farewell discourse He would not have named the Spirit "the Spirit of truth."

This title came from Him—and who so competent to give it?—and the use of it is peculiar to Him. The designation does not occur elsewhere in the Bible; but it is not on that account the less deserving of attention and remembrance. "Truth is in order to holiness" is a most pregnant sentence; and the two names "the Spirit of truth" and "the Spirit of holiness," are intimately connected.

If the Spirit were not the one, He would not be the other. No holiness, no happiness; and it is every whit as true, no truth, no holiness; but if truth is to affect us according to its nature, it must enter and secure a lodgment in our minds.

Now, why did Jesus explain to the disciples that by "another Comforter" He referred to the Spirit of truth? Was it His desire and intention to put it before them that there was in the Spirit neither ignorance, nor error, nor deceit; that His knowledge was all-embracing, and that He was faithful to His promises? Not a doubt of it. But these meanings, excellent as they are, do not exhaust this title—the Spirit of truth. In so designating the Spirit which He said He would

pray the Father to send in Christian copiousness, He chiefly intended to teach that it was the distinctive work of the Spirit *to reveal and apply truth*. Were the prophets utterers of truth? They "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Were the apostles preachers of truth, and the truth? Their relation to the Spirit was similar to that of the prophets. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth (a repetition of the name), which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me; and ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" and what would be the result? "And ye shall be witnesses unto me."

Did Jesus bear witness unto the truth? He did, and laid so much stress upon this department of His work, that He tells us that this was the end for the accomplishment of which He had been born, and that "for this cause" He had come into the world. Was He, then, the organ of the Spirit? We are not at liberty to separate His bearing witness unto the truth from the Spirit. We are informed that at His baptism in Jordan the

Spirit descended upon Him "in semblance of a dove;" and if the symbol was evanescent, it does not follow that the thing symbolised was equally so. His words were "the words of eternal life," for they were the words of God; and how is this proved? "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him?" The reason assigned would have no force if the Spirit were not God; and if we trace all the truth revealed in Scripture to the Spirit as its source, why should we not trace to Him the truth which heathen nations, century after century, have discovered, and by the possession of which they have been, negatively and positively, blessed? All truth has its home in God, and in the person of the Spirit He reveals it to angels and men.

In the person of the Spirit He also applies it; and if in carrying on His own particular work, truth is the grand instrument which the Spirit wields, and by which He achieves moral victories, as I believe it is, what marvel that Jesus should have called the Spirit "the Spirit of truth?" The name pours a flood of light on both the nature and extent of the Holy Spirit's work. Yes, *the extent* of the Spirit's work, for it will not be averred that

Bible-and-Gospel-blessed lands have a monopoly of truth. It is not to us matter of surprise that Dr. Stowell should make the following concession in regard to the heathen :— “The history of man, on its smallest and on its largest scale, abounds with so many proofs of Divine forbearance towards sinners, that the self-condemned man cannot look seriously on his own experience, and on the general experiences of mankind, without catching some glimpses of the great truth *that God is gracious as well as just.*” Well, where truth is there is the Spirit, and there the Spirit is at work, making the most of it. He does not let any portion of it lie idle or unused ; and the title “the Spirit of truth” should of itself raise an insurmountable barrier between us and the acceptance of the doctrine of regeneration before faith, and by a direct act of omnipotence.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPIRITUAL LIFE BEGUN AS WELL AS DEVELOPED
BY MEANS OF TRUTH.

REGENERATION is not the whole of the process of salvation, but it is a very important part of it. It does not differ essentially from sanctification. It is the initial stage of sanctification, or the germ of holiness. Figuratively, it is the fountain from which the stream of spiritual life issues. If, therefore, regeneration went before faith, and were effected independently of it and the Gospel, it would be comparatively unimportant whether the Gospel was preached, and whether the Word of God was circulated, read, studied, and expounded, or not. But do we gather this from a perusal of the Scriptures? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" is the Church's "marching orders," direct from the Church's Head; and may we not infer from this that salvation, including its beginning in the soul—

regeneration—is somehow conditional on the declaration and reception of Gospel truth? If the Word which the first Christians, taking example by the apostles, went everywhere preaching, herein acting in strict obedience to the Master's injunction, be not the instrument of regeneration, there is no way of properly accounting for the solemnity of the charge which Paul, in the near prospect of martyrdom, delivered to Timothy:—"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, **PREACH THE WORD.**"

Reading this charge solemnises like coming into the presence of death; but how the apostle ever came to pen it if regeneration go before faith, and is brought about—as Lazarus was summoned from the grave—by the immediate exercise of Almighty power, is to me incomprehensible. If it be answered that, as an expression in Peter's address at the general council held at Jerusalem, and of which we have an account in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, clearly establishes—namely, "purifying their hearts by faith"—sanctification turns on faith in "the word of the Gospel," I ask, what conceivable reason can be given for sanctification turning on

faith but regeneration not? I should think that if regeneration is what I have defined it, the germ or beginning of sanctification, the hinge of the one is the hinge of both, and that what is adapted to develop holiness is adapted to originate it.

Is regeneration an element in salvation? This will not be disputed; and if not, how comes it that all through Scripture salvation is represented as conditional on faith in the Gospel, if regeneration precede faith, and the sinful heart of man be rectified apart from the Gospel, as by an act of omnipotence light was created? When, in answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" Paul gave this direction—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," did the apostle mean that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was the condition of all parts of the process of salvation *except regeneration*? To force a change of heart on a sinner is not to save, but to destroy him. He ceases for the time being to be what it is his glory to be—a free moral agent; and however freely he may act afterwards, it remains true that the spring of spiritual life within him was unsealed by the hand of Omnipotence. His consent was neither asked nor given.

That in the affair of the soul's regeneration there should be a setting aside of the Gospel, and a dispensing with the act of faith in it, as many contend, is the more astonishing when due note is taken of what is said in the Bible on the subject of the regenerating power of the Gospel in God's word as containing it.

The author of the nineteenth Psalm was apparently possessed by the fear that, with all the assistance which the Spirit could render, he would fail to do justice to the law—the verbal revelation—of God; but if it had entered his mind that it lacked adaptation and power to regenerate the heart, would he have been so lavish in the bestowment of praise upon it? The law was “sweeter to his taste than honey,” his “meditation all the day;” and he realised that it was the peculiarity of God's words that they gave light. Human words were in his estimation no more to His words than starlight to sunlight. When the writer inserted in the Psalm this glowing eulogium on the law—“the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the

judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether"—he dipped his pen in the hues of his own experience, and wrote under the guidance of the Spirit of truth. But could he have helped checking himself if it had occurred to him that the verbal revelation, with all its excellencies, was not instrumentally adapted to make a new man of him?

Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel of Christ? For the same reason substantially that a physician is not ashamed of a remedy that was never known to fail:—"for *it* is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It is impotence itself relative to the unbeliever, but it is a kind of omnipotence relative to the believer; and, in so writing, Paul honoured the Holy Spirit. But would he have been so proud of it if his inward thought had been that, whatever the Gospel might accomplish in its recipients, there was one thing which lay beyond its might, no matter by whom wielded as an instrument—regeneration.

No more potent reason can be adduced for receiving the word of the Gospel than that with which St. James plies "the twelve tribes of the dispersion:"—"Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word,

which is able to save your souls." Would he have predicated of the word ability to save the soul if he had understood that it had no concern with the act of regeneration? Decidedly not; and in thus magnifying it he virtually magnifies the Holy Spirit. In praising highly a picture we praise the artist, and in praising the Word of God we praise its Author. The sword of steel takes away the life of the body; but the sword which is of the Spirit's shaping and sharpening answers its purpose when it slays "the dire root and seed of sin;" and the more we extol it, the more we extol the Maker. The Spirit fashioned it for the use of Christians, and none but they can handle it effectively. As the Bishop of Rochester says,— "The sword of the Spirit can only make good fight for God when a regenerate hand clasps it." He fashioned it, moreover, for personal use, and if in the hand of the Christian warrior it makes "good fight for God," what a splendid fight it ought to make when wielded by the Spirit himself! His hand overshadows the world, and is never found without it. Alike in the regeneration of sinners, and the edification of saints, He makes use of it, and never had any other intention; and if it be able to comfort and sanctify, but not to change

the heart, how is it to be explained that the apostle James was "moved" to speak of it as "able to save the soul?" Is any sinner either safe for eternity, or meet for heaven, who has not undergone the happiest and most needful of all changes—regeneration?

CHAPTER XIV.

EVIDENCE AGAINST THE DOGMA OF REGENERATION BEFORE FAITH.

I HAVE stated that the doctrine of regeneration before faith, and by a direct act of omnipotence, has not an inch of foothold in the sacred writings; and I hasten to show that there is not only no evidence for it, but abundant evidence against it.

The inspired writers constantly represent it as following, and as the effect of faith in Christ; and they set us the example of connecting it with God or the Spirit as the efficient cause, but with the Gospel as the instrumental cause. St. James and the twelve tribes were Christians or regenerate persons, and who had spiritually begotten or regenerated them? It was God; and how had He changed their hearts and made them His spiritual children? With or without means? Let St. James supply the answer:—"Of His

own will begat He us *with the word of truth.*" In the presence of this quotation what becomes of the doctrine of regeneration before faith? It vanishes like mist when played upon by the beams of the morning sun, aided by a violent breeze. If an "I will" sufficed to make them God's children, it was not in this way that the Galatians were made His children. Faith in Christ had to do with the change in their case, for we read, "Ye are all the children of God (regenerate) by faith in Christ Jesus."

From 1 Peter i. 22, 23, we learn how the Christian strangers had purified their hearts. For what growth in grace they had experienced they were under obligation to the Spirit; but they were not passive all the while. They were active, and their activity took the form of obedience to the truth. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fervently." Suppose that they had not obeyed the truth, would the Spirit have carried forward in them the work of sanctification? Assuredly not. We learn further what was the instrumental cause of their regeneration:—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by

the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever . . . And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." As one sinner is regenerated, so is another ; and how were the Christian strangers regenerated? Peter ought to know; and he points as with outstretched finger to the Gospel or the word of God as the never absent instrument. If they had been born again, his conviction was that each and all had been born again by the immortal seed of the word. The metaphor may be either botanical or physiological. No Gospel, no regeneration; and when we consider what the Gospel is, we are necessitated to think of it as the instrumental cause. This is the right view to take of it, for it is the view which Christ had of it, as is plain from these words,—“ And ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free.*” If the persons addressed continued in the word which He was and preached, they would attain to a thorough knowledge of the truth, and consequent spiritual emancipation, of which regeneration is an element. Why did Jesus not say that the power of God, without the intervention of the truth, would regenerate them, and make them spiritually free? He did not say so *because*, sinner though man be, he is treated

by the Holy Spirit, who has respect for facts, and more particularly facts of God's bringing to pass, as a free moral agent; and because in every instance of regeneration, as the Bible and consciousness unite in testifying, the truth comes between the Spirit and the subject of regeneration. When the regenerate take it upon them to give an account of the way in which their hearts and their lives were changed, they uniformly make mention of the truth, and it may be safely predicted that they will to the end of time.

In the cleanness or purity which characterised the eleven disciples, there was nothing mysterious to Jesus. "All ye are clean"—have the capacities and standing requisite to the bearing of fruit acceptable and glorifying to God—"through (by means of) the word which I have spoken unto you." They owed it not to themselves, but to Him; and it had not been secretly or mysteriously imparted. It had been produced or created by the instrumentality of the word which He had spoken unto them; and hence not without their consent and co-operation. If they had not heard, understood, believed, and retained the word of Christ, they would not have attained to purity, or become regenerate

persons. There were many among the Jews who could not be thus addressed—"Now ye are clean;" and what was the reason? They did not receive the word of Jesus, or take in the truth about Himself or the Messiah; and if they did not, how could it act regenerat-ingly or cleansingly upon them? But the disciples were attentive to it, and receptive of it; and the blessed consequence was, that they underwent a process of cleansing analogous to the pruning of a vine, and were rendered fit for the service of God. It thus appears that regeneration, which may be taken as representative of all parts of the process of salvation, is conditional on faith, and is effected by means of the Gospel; in other words, that the Holy Spirit as a worker confines himself to the use of moral and resistible means.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT IN, TO, AND
WITH THE RENEWED SOUL.

As there is a natural and a spiritual body, so there is, in relation to God, natural and spiritual sonship. It was of the latter, however, that the apostle was thinking when he penned Rom. viii. 16—"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This is the right kind of sonship, and the only kind that is of any avail. Resemblance to God in nature is a thing for which we should be profoundly grateful; but no privilege or blessing attaches to it. God gives to each creature what nature He pleases; and creatures are not responsible for the natures which distinguish them. Who ever thought of blaming or praising a tree because it was a tree, or a bird because it was a bird, or a dog because it was a dog? We are simply responsible for the use which we

make of it when the nature which we receive is intellectual and moral. Since, then, in verse seventeenth, Paul goes on to speak of those who are the children of God as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"—privileges than which there are none higher—it must have been spiritual sonship that was before his mind when he wrote the sixteenth verse. If we are to enjoy the presence and favour of God, we must become like Him in character, or His spiritual children by faith in Christ Jesus. Until we do, we are merely the natural sons of God, and likeness in nature to our Creator and Preserver does not warrant us in anticipating eternal life as our portion. If the character be unholy, God must deal with us accordingly.

Paul does not teach that the Spirit of God bears witness with the spirits of men generally that they are the children of God—that class of children who may be described as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." If the Spirit did, it would be an instance of false witness-bearing; for far and near there are those who are not the spiritual children of God. There are thousands and tens of thousands in so-called Christian lands who would object to be called the children of God.

They know that they are not characterised by a filial spirit toward Him. They know that, though like Him in nature, they are not like Him in character; and if in a sinful state, and constantly committing sin, they cannot reasonably expect fatherly treatment at His hands. Christians alone are the spiritual children of God, and of them alone can it be affirmed that the Divine Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God—His children in such a sense that they are his “heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ.” *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we,”* meaning Paul and the Saints at Rome, *“are the children of God; and if children, then heirs.”* Whatever we are to understand by the testimony of the Spirit referred to in this passage, none have it except Christians, or God’s spiritual children.

It is to be feared that, as M. Henry puts it, “many speak peace to themselves to whom the God of heaven does not speak peace.” They take much too favourable a view, or a wrong view of themselves. They fancy themselves the children of God. Their experience is not that of His children. Their lives, when closely examined, show that they are self-deceived; and God, who cannot be imposed

on, knows that they are not Christians, and therefore not His spiritual children. None of the real children of God, however, are ignorant of the fact. Just as the physically sound all know that they are in a healthy condition, for they feel that they are; so Christians all know that they are the spiritual children of God, for they feel that they are His children. How can they be ignorant of the fact, if, as the apostle tells us, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit that they are the children of God?" Paul's idea was that the testimony of the Spirit was common to him and the Roman saints; and if so, it must be possessed by Christians as a body. No other position is tenable. He thought of the spirit that was in him and them as "the spirit of adoption;" and if he did, we cannot wonder that he should have added,—*"The Spirit itself beareth witness,"* &c. Those who have undergone such a change of heart that it comes natural to them to call God "Father" ought to regard themselves as standing to God in a filial relation, or as members of His adopted family.

The reference in the expression "the Spirit itself" is to that Spirit which is spoken of indifferently in the ninth verse as "the Spirit of God" and "the Spirit of Christ,"

and which is so prominently brought under notice in the eighth chapter of Romans. This is much more probable than that the reference is to "the spirit of adoption," understanding by that phrase the disposition suitable to a state of adoption; for a disposition cannot properly be represented as bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. It is rather evidence, than a witness-bearer on the subject. But with the utmost propriety may it be averred that the third person of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit—bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. A person like ourselves, the Spirit is competent to the act of testifying; and if He take to do with Christians at all, it is what might be expected from His infinitely glorious character as revealed in Scripture, that He would seek to benefit them by bearing witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. An act of this sort must be admitted to be in harmony with all His other acts in relation to them.

"The Spirit itself" is a remarkable expression, and may be paraphrased, "The very Spirit of God." It is suggestive of the love and condescension of the Spirit. It is also suggestive, as Alford observes, of His indepen-

dence, and at the same time, as coming from God, of the preciousness and importance of the testimony. On whose testimony should value be set if not on the Spirit's testimony? It transcends all mere human testimony as far as the infinite transcends the finite. The Spirit is incapable of error and deception.

As one of the persons of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost is well named "Spirit." So is the human mind. The difference between the one spirit and the other is so great that we cannot adequately conceive it. The Spirit of God only knows wherein and to what extent He differs from the human mind or spirit; but the term "spirit" is applicable to both. They are the same in kind, and the realisation of their sameness in kind may in part account for the proposition—"The Spirit itself bears witness," &c. Again, they are quite distinct as witness-bearers; and if I were arguing for the Bible against Pantheism or the system which teaches the identity of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, I should not omit quoting and turning to account this very decisive passage. If Paul had been a Pantheist, or been in the habit of confounding the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, it would never have occurred to

him thus to express himself,—“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” He manifestly looked upon them as separate witnesses, but as bearing a joint-testimony.

The testimony is one; but two witnesses are and must be concerned with it—on the one hand, the Spirit of God, and on the other the spirit of Christians. Take either spirit away, and the testimony is destroyed. The testimony lies between them, and the purport of it is that Christians are the children of God. They are dependent on the Spirit of God for the knowledge of their filial relation to God; and how does the Spirit produce the conviction that they are the children of God? In what does the evidence consist, and to whom is it presented? It is presented, not to others, but to themselves. In the French and German versions of the Bible “gives witness to” is substituted for “bears witness with,” which is the literal rendering of the Greek. Others infer from the “walk and conversation” of Christians that they are what they profess to be; but they know themselves that they are the children of God, because they have evidence in the witness of the Spirit within

themselves. It is presented by the Spirit of God to, and apprehended by their spirit; and if this be true, it is obvious that the Spirit *bears witness with* their spirit, that they are the children of God. Bearing witness with is involved in bearing witness to; and in what does the evidence consist? This is a question of vast importance, and whether Christians consult the inspired word or their own experience, they can be at no loss for a reply. It consists substantially in evoking and sustaining in them a filial disposition toward God, manifesting itself in a filial course of life. This is the view taken by Alford and Olshausen, and many other expositors. Alford speaks of the witness of the Spirit as consisting in "a certitude of the Spirit's presence and work continually asserted within us." Olshausen speaks of it as "manifested in His comforting us, His stirring us up to prayer, His drawing us to works of love," &c. According to Albert Barnes, the Spirit bears witness with the spirit of Christians that they are the children of God by "producing in them the appropriate effects of His influence;" and this is seemingly the interpretation that is supported by the preceding context. If we have received "the

Spirit of adoption," or that Spirit which prompts us to address God as "Abba, Father," we should unhesitatingly conclude that we are God's dear children; but if we are without "the appropriate effects" of the Spirit's influence, we are without evidence that we are the children of God, and we but deceive ourselves if we talk of the Spirit as bearing witness to and with our spirit that we are God's children. Such testimony has no existence out of our own imagination. We are the children of God if we have filial affection for, and filial confidence in God; and what is the Spirit's relation to these emotions or states? He is the *author* of them, in connection with the reception of the Gospel; and what is our relation to them? We are *conscious* of them; and, with these facts before his mind, one sees not well how the apostle could avoid remarking that the Spirit bore witness with the spirit of Christians like himself and the saints at Rome, that they were the children of God. To have said less would not have been to do the facts justice. Christians know that they are the children of God, because they feel as children, or because through the medium of, or by means of filial emotions, the Spirit of God bears witness

with their spirit that they are His children. Who are the spiritual children of God if not those who act because they feel as His children, or who are like God in moral character?

It is by a logical process or by the *indirect* testimony of the Spirit of God, therefore, that Christians know that they are the children of God; and the indirectness of the testimony does not detract from its value. They reason thus: All who have a filial spirit toward God are His children; we have such a spirit toward Him, therefore we are the children of God; and, so far as I am able to judge, nothing could be more satisfactory. To have passed from death unto life is the same as to be a Christian: and how did the Apostle John and the early Christians know that they had passed from death unto life, that they were Christians and, consequently, the spiritual children of God? By a process of reasoning, as 1 John iii. 14 clearly proves—"We know that we have passed from death unto life;" because the Spirit has borne direct testimony to the happy transition? No; but "*because we love the brethren.*" Love of the brotherhood was the proof; and, in like manner, a filial state of heart toward God, which cannot exist apart from the Holy Spirit, or without our being

conscious of it, evidences that we are the children of God.

The sixteenth verse of the eighth chapter of Romans is by many supposed to teach that Christians owe the knowledge of their filial relation to God to the *direct testimony* of the Holy Spirit; but this doctrine does not appear to me to be contained in the verse or in any other part of Scripture. Our objections to it are mainly these :—(1.) *It cannot be definitely ascertained what it is.* It is made to consist in a variety of things.

(2.) *It is superfluous.* If I am conscious that a filial disposition toward God animates me, what more do I need to assure me that I am one of God's children? If that does not constitute me His child, what would? And if I am possessed of a filial disposition, how can I help being conscious of it? Further, if I have not a child's heart toward God, can any one thing, or any number of separate things, make up for the want of it? Undoubtedly not. In the absence of that, visions and voices, impressions, light, joy, rapture are worthless.

(3.) *If we begin with direct testimony, where are we to stop?*

(4.) *Multitudes of Christians, whose faith*

and purity are above suspicion, know nothing of the direct testimony of the Spirit to their spiritual sonship as it is commonly explained. But if it were a reality, and adapted to serve the purpose, this would not be the case. I, therefore, conclude that the witness-bearing of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God is not direct, but indirect. It is the possession of a filial disposition toward God that is the evidence of our filial relation to Him; and happy are they who can, in all humility and honesty, assert that they have the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirit that they are the children of God, for if children, they may confidently calculate on being treated by God as children. The paternal nature is as sure to manifest itself as the spirit of sonship; and who is a Father like unto God? To be the heirs of earthly parents does not at best amount to much; but what a privilege to be the heirs of God, to have God himself as our portion, and to have the free and legitimate use of the entire universe!

CHAPTER XVI.

CHRISTIANS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE true consecrating power is the *presence* of God. Since, then, we cannot be where God is not, there must be a sense in which "every common bush is afire with God." We are not chargeable with using the language of exaggeration when we talk of "the great temple of Nature." Filling, as God does, the universe with His essential presence, sacredness attaches to every object in it; and wherever we happen to be or to go, we should do in spirit what Moses, under the shadow of Mount Horeb, was commanded to do literally—put the shoes from off our feet. There is special propriety in those who believe that the Virgin's Son was "God manifest in the flesh" calling Palestine "the Holy Land;" and we may challenge men to show us anywhere a bit of unconsecrated ground.

There are, however, higher manifestations

of God's presence in some objects and places than in others; and that object or place is pre-eminently the temple of God where most of God is revealed and enjoyed.

It is no marvel that St. John saw no temple in heaven, not merely because "church ordinances give place to the God of ordinances," but because heaven itself is one vast temple. It is the peculiar dwelling-place of God. Among and to its bright inhabitants God manifests Himself as He does not manifest Himself in any other portion of His dominions; and there is not one of them that is not animated by the spirit of worship.

To the Jew, while Judaism continued in force, the holiest spot on earth was the temple at Jerusalem. There in visible symbol God was believed to dwell, and hold communion with His people; but the introduction of Christianity brought with it, as it were, a change of residence on the part of Jehovah. It is evident from what Paul says in 1 Cor. iii. 16, that he had ceased to think of God as dwelling in any house of man's planning and construction, and that he had come to regard Christians as forming the temple of God. The superiority of this new temple to the most magnificent material temple that

ever was built, is everywhere in his epistles tacitly assumed. To a Spiritual Being such as God what is matter in its most beautiful forms and combinations to spirit? If it was clear to Demosthenes that "man's heart was the best and most stately temple," how much more to the prince of the apostles, Paul! The question, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" may be thus paraphrased,—“Surely ye cannot be ignorant that ye are the temple of God.” The apostle had convincing evidence in his own experience that the Spirit of God dwelt in himself, and he was persuaded that in this respect he and the Corinthians were on an equality. The Greek term translated “temple” is derived from a verb signifying *to dwell*. Hence, perhaps, the addition of the clause,—“And that the Spirit of God *dwelleth* in you.” What made them, collectively viewed, “the temple of God?” It was the fact that they were “an habitation of God through (in) the Spirit;” and if they examined themselves they could not be in any doubt as to the fact. Each of them was the temple of God, and all together they constituted His temple. How could God dwell in them *jointly* except by dwelling in

them *separately*? If the ranks of Christians were to swell to hundreds of millions, they would not be more than the temple of God, and if they were to become reduced to two or three, they would not be less than the temple of God. A temple is a public building erected in honour of some divinity, and where the divinity is to be worshipped; and are not Christians worshippers of God? This is what they are by profession, and if they be not, they must be Christians only in name. Scholars tell us that the fundamental notion of temple is not construction, but *separation*; and what are Christians? Are they not God's elect ones—separated by Him at the time of conversion from the world, and to holy uses? This was the view which Paul took of them, as the following passage (2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18), which I quote the more willingly that it explains so admirably what is meant by the indwelling of the Spirit of God in Christians, proves—"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not

the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

I am not cognisant of the existence within the boards of the Bible of a stronger proof for the personality and Divinity of the Spirit than is found in 1 Cor. iii. 16. Dwelling is a *personal* act. Were not the "dwellers in Mesopotamia" human beings—persons? They were; and if the Spirit of God were not a person, He could not dwell in Christians. Nay more, if He were not a Divine person, and therefore possessed of the attribute of omnipresence, He could not dwell in Christians, residing in different countries, at one and the same time. In a preceding verse, the tenth, Christians are spoken of as "God's husbandry" and as "God's building." The one figure is taken from agriculture; the other is taken from architecture. The latter figure is carried forward and completed in verse sixteenth—"Know ye not that ye are the temple (this is the kind of building which Christians unitedly form) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" In the nineteenth verse of the sixth chapter, the apostle's question is repeated with slight variation—"What? know ye not that your body is

the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" and this passage is useful as showing that when Paul spoke of "the Spirit of God" as dwelling in Christians, he had before his mind "the Holy Ghost," and that the Spirit is a gift from above. The saints in Corinth were under obligation to God for the operative presence of the Holy Ghost in them, body as well as soul, for the Spirit either dwells not at all or dwells in the whole man; and it is not conceivable that Paul would have argued from the dwelling of the Spirit of God in them that they were the temple of God, if he had not in his inmost heart held that the Spirit of God was a Divine Person.

His object in thus interrogating the Corinthian Christians,—“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”—was twofold: (1.) To guard them from being deceived and injured by the false teachers and loose livers who were unhappily at work amongst them. The evil party glanced at in the chapter might think that to corrupt and ruin Christians was nothing—the veriest trifle; but they were wrong. Paul let them know that Christians, whether living in the city or the country, were

—

the temple of God ; and that if they defiled the temple of God, they would not themselves escape destruction :—"If any man defile (destroy) the temple of God him shall God destroy." Ah! it is a tremendously serious business to so much as touch with foul, unfriendly hand the temple of God. (2.) To impress them with the need for watchfulness, prayer, and holy living. The Spirit of God is no ordinary guest. To Him are applicable such epithets as "gentle," "awful," "holy." This is what He is in point of character ; and through the door of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ He enters and takes possession of Christians expressly to carry on within them unto completion the deliverance of their souls from sin and its miserable consequences. Unless, then, they treat Him as a guest of His quality should be treated—unless they receive the light in which He dwells, accept the comfort and guidance which He brings, and make use of the spiritual strength for the discharge of duty which He loves to infuse—unless they "choose and cherish all things good," they are sure to offend Him, and in the end cause Him to depart. As it has been quaintly and familiarly expressed—"Religion loves to lie clean." Holy Himself, the temple

of God should be holy ; and it is for Christians to see to it that it suffers from no species or degree of defilement.

CHAPTER XVII.

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT.

IF what we had supposed to be a corpse were to stand up, and begin to walk about, what a surprise we should get! We should at once conclude that a mistake had been committed. There is no quieter spot than a churchyard. Side by side lie the dead, but they neither salute nor reply. There is no movement in death. The sight of a dead object makes an impression upon us; we shrink from contact with it, but there is no reason for dreading it. The dead can neither injure nor be injured; they are alike incapable of speech and motion; but "life is action." This is a popular definition of it which all can appreciate. The child that is full of life and health is stirring. It has been so active during the day that it is ready for bed when night comes; and when it inclines to sit or lie about,^o instead of exerting itself, we infer that it is not well. There are living creatures which do not dis-

play much energy; but some measure of activity is indispensable to the retention of life. Its preservation demands an expenditure of life; and ordinarily the more life the more activity. This is true, not only of animal life, but intellectual and spiritual life. If, then, life is rightly defined as *action*, how came Paul to pen these words (Gal. v. 24)—“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit?” Might not the Galatians as persons whose dead souls had been quickened by the Spirit be trusted to walk in the Spirit? So long as it could be affirmed of them that they lived in the Spirit, could they avoid walking in the Spirit? To answer that they could amounts to a denial of two things:—(1.) That life is action; and, (2.) that the kind of life determines in all cases the kind of action. In Rom. viii. 5, Paul recognises it as a fact that “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh,” and that “they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit.”

Nevertheless, the hortatory imperative—“let us also walk in the Spirit”—was called for on this ground, that life in the spirit is *losable*. It does not exist of necessity, so that what the apostle was concerned about was that he and the Galatians should keep a

vigilant eye on the life within which had been generated by the Divine Spirit, and prevent its extinction by a return of spiritual deadness. The way to secure walking in the Spirit is to perpetuate, and use means to increase life in and by the Spirit. The more of life in the Spirit that Christians possess, the surer are they to be guided by the Spirit as their governing principle. Before there can be holy activity, or walking in the Spirit, there must be living in the Spirit, and a high degree of life ensures close and vigorous walking of a corresponding nature.

Paul did not take it upon him to decide whether the Galatians were living in the Spirit or not. He left the decision of the point to themselves. He was aware that they professed to be Christians, and his anxiety was restricted to this that if he and they were living in the Spirit, their daily walk or conduct should indicate that they had become alive unto righteousness and God through Jesus Christ: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." There is no preposition in the original answering to "in," and Dr. Lightfoot would translate the verse thus—"If we live to the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit;" but his translation of the clauses is open to the objec-

tion that living to the Spirit does not materially differ from walking by the Spirit. Others prefer translating the passage thus—"If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit," and by "the Spirit," as opposed to "the flesh;" and as the context and the parallel places clearly establish, we are to understand, not the human spirit, but the Spirit of God. He is, and is set forth in Scripture as the generator and upholder of spiritual life; and apart from His efficacy and operation we can no more walk, or abound in holy deeds, than we can live spiritually. He begins the work of sanctification, and He is required to complete it, stage by stage; and if this had not been the apostle's belief, he would not have coupled living and walking with the Spirit as he does.

To walk or not to walk is not the question. Moral agents by the will of God, we must adopt one of two courses—give ourselves to the practice of sin or holiness. We must employ our time, and our powers of body and mind, in some way; and no Christian can be in any difficulty as to how he should use himself and what belongs to him. Since he lives by the Spirit, he can and should walk by the Spirit; and it is important for his own sake, and the sake of others, that "the outer life

should be in unison with its inner source." If he do not crucify "the flesh with its affections and lusts"—if "the fruit of the Spirit," consisting of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," adorn not his life, he cannot expect to get credit for being animated and ruled by the Spirit, in place of by the flesh. He "that committeth sin is of the devil," whereas "he that doeth righteousness is righteous."

His usefulness, moreover, turns on walking by—in the line or direction of the Spirit. If honesty is to be of any service to others, it must exhibit itself in our actions. If love is to be of any service to others, it must express itself in words and acts of kindness. It was the *good-doing* of Christ that benefited those among whom He lived and laboured; and if Christians do not walk by the Spirit, or submit to His sway in all things, living by the Spirit will soon come to an end. The perpetuation of spiritual life, not to speak of its increase, turns on the unreserved surrender of themselves to the leading of the Spirit, or the practical manifestation of it. Repression tends to destroy it, and "the works of the flesh" are as fatal to it as they are inconsistent with it. The Spirit will not abide in those who offer opposition to

His authority and will, and who show by their mode of speaking and acting that self, and not God, fills the throne of the heart. Realising, therefore, that they live by the Spirit, Christians should make it their aim to walk by the Spirit, and should bear in mind that the more of Heaven's own order which they can introduce into their lives, they have the better a guarantee that they shall never be found making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT EVERY MAN'S FRIEND TO
THE LAST.

AT what point in the history of a soul the Holy Spirit begins to deal with it cannot be determined with certainty. That the Spirit has a perfect knowledge of mind and its laws, and freedom of access to it by every existing avenue, and that the will is always present to influence it for good, we are safe in assuming. In the analysis of character we come at last to impressions; and at a very early period a mother can make impressions on the mind of her child; but surely in this respect she has no advantage over the Spirit. If the Spirit is a Divine person, He must be able to operate in ways and to an extent impossible even to a mother. Previous to the dawn of moral agency, we cannot obviously be treated as moral agents; but so soon as we can distinguish between right and wrong, moral influ-

ence can be exerted upon us; and although we may lose many opportunities of usefulness, the Spirit of God no more loses opportunities of increasing knowledge, holiness, and happiness throughout the universe than He loses time itself. Begin, however, His gracious operations when He may, He never desists from working while body and soul continue united; and in every case He does for the objects of His solicitude all that the circumstances will allow. Straitened in ourselves we may be, but not in the Spirit. The Spirit, as a fountain of light and holy influence, has nothing intermittent about it. His aim in His dealings with us is not to set us eventually on the pinnacle of spiritual independence, or to absorb us into Himself, but to bring us into the heartiest possible co-operation with Him; and we cannot do without Him at any stage of spiritual life and development. Who is the holiest Christian? That one whose ear is most sensitive to the Spirit's voice, and who is most under His control. The Spirit goes down, we believe, with the saints to the brink of the Jordan of death; He accompanies them into the unseen world, and in heaven itself is ever with them to lead onward and upward.

"There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,
 And with the Mother Maid,
And with the Holy Spirit One,
 In glory like arrayed;
 And not to one created thing
 Shall our embrace be given;
 But all our joy shall be in God,
 For only God is heaven."

A habit of faith in Christ ensures fellowship with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When Jesus, realising that He was on the wing, spoke to the disciples of "another Comforter," He sought to reconcile them to His departure by telling them that the Spirit of promise would "abide with them forever." He assumed that they would have continual need of Him; and He certified them that the Spirit would *dwell* with them, and would be in them. The Spirit would be, in several respects, more to them than He had been or could be; and in this aspect of His work particularly—that He would stay with them, and never go away from them. If, as they had it in their power to do—conversion not being a change of nature, but rather of the leading disposition, or moral state and character—they refused to listen to, obey, and work with the Spirit, they could not have the Spirit *in* them, but they would have Him

with them. Backsliding is a dread possibility, and it may not be arrested until perdition is reached. In Hebrews x. 39, there is distinct recognition of a class who not merely draw back within limits, but who "draw back unto perdition;" but incipient backsliding does not occasion the withdrawment of the Holy Spirit from the subjects of it. It is not asserted in Scripture that it does. Backsliders may repent and return to God, and if they do, they have His promise that He will "heal their backslidings." None are abandoned of the Spirit on this side the grave. If there were those to whom we could point and say,—"These have been forsaken of the Spirit," what would be the use of praying for them, or preaching to them? All our efforts to save them would be beating the air; and if done in ignorance, we would be the more to be pitied. The Spirit is with backsliders all through, just as all through He is with those who have never been in a position to backslide.

It is a powerful argument against delay, and motive to energetic action, that there is "no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave;" but "to him that is joined to all the living there is hope."

“ As long as life its term extends,
 Hope's blest dominion never ends;
 For while the lamp holds on to burn,
 The greatest sinner may return.”

We have all an interest in contending for the truth of these lines. They are not poetry, but fact. However long and high the hand with which we may sin, our case is not absolutely hopeless till we “cross that bourne whence no traveller e'er returns;” and what makes it possible for the greatest sinner to return? The presence with, and the pity of the Spirit for him, and the help afforded by the Spirit till the last sand in life's sand-glass has silently run out.

The worst sinners are convertible, and have been soundly converted all down the Christian ages; and late conversions are of frequent occurrence. It is as perilous as it is criminal to put off decision for Christ. The deadliest of all Satan's nets has this for its name—*Procrastination*; but we have no right to look any sinner in the face, and say that he has sinned away his day of grace. Did Christ or the apostles talk so? How runs the apostolic commission?—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” There is, then, no sinner of any class, condition,

or age in the wide world for whom there is not "good tidings of great joy;" with whom faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is an impossible act, or who would not be saved if he were to receive "the faithful saying," that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

The thought that Jerusalem had not known and profited by "the time of her visitation" drew tears from the Man of Sorrows' eyes, and wrung from Him this most touching lament—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." What made Him express Himself thus,—“But now they are hid from thine eyes?” The foreseen doom that was pending over the city. The “day” referred to had not quite come to an end, for the apostles were instructed to begin their preaching at Jerusalem, which they did, and with glorious results. The conversion of the thief on the cross at the eleventh hour proves that, robbery and murder notwithstanding, the Spirit had not turned His back on him; and what we are told about him is calculated to strengthen us in the belief that the striving of the Spirit runs parallel with human life *on earth*.

There is nothing in the Gospel histories more beautiful, or that lights up to finer purpose, the spirit and character of Jesus, than His treatment of Judas. Till he broke away, and went about the base black business of the betrayal, Jesus laboured to reach his heart and conscience, and win him to His side, or make a "new creature" of him; and may I not add, that he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father—and the Spirit?

Awful is the picture of Ephraim's spiritual condition given in Hosea iv. 17: "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." It is a lightning-photograph. Keil and Delitsch thus paraphrase the verse—"It may continue in its idolatry, the punishment will not be long delayed." By "Ephraim" is meant the northern kingdom, or the ten tribes, which had become so agglutinated to idols that they might be represented as "fastened to them as to a stock or stake;" and the safe course for Judah was to "let him alone," or leave Ephraim to his fate, lest, instead of saving him, she should fall herself. "Let him alone" is an address, not to the prophets, but, as verse 15 shows, to Judah to "avoid the contagion of Israel's bad example." Hosea iv. 17, therefore, falls far short of proving that any

are given up of the Spirit until they pass through "the gates of death." There is encouragement for the farthest off from heaven and God, and for those who compassionately pray, plan, and toil to bring them under the attractions of that mightiest of moral magnets—the cross of Calvary—in the doctrine that, despair of and desert sinners who may, the Holy Spirit is with them as a Friend to the last; and we should take care neither to dim nor diminish it. Jesus did not suffer from loneliness. He did not hide it from the disciples that, when His hour came, they would, in their confusion and terror, leave Him alone; but He let them know that He would still have company. "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me;" and no worker for God and humanity is ever doomed to the endurance of absolute loneliness. The Spirit of God is with him, and he who has the Spirit with him is never in the minority.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE CHANGE FROM GLORY
TO GLORY, AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE
LORD.

WHEN man undertakes a piece of work, be it simple or complicated, trivial or important, we have no guarantee that he will finish it.

(1.) *He may not live to complete it.* In relation to the Divine Proprietor, he is a tenant-at-will, and any hour he may receive notice to quit. Human beings die at all ages. Birth, not growth, brings us under the law of mortality; and sudden calls out of time into eternity are of daily occurrence.

(2.) *The means of finishing the work which he begins may fail him.* Is money necessary to its completion? "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." We have all known instances; and are accustomed to

remark that money is more easily lost than made. The hand that is full to-day may be empty to-morrow.

Are health and strength necessary to its completion? How true it is that—

“No present health can health insure,”

and that—

“A fit of common sickness pulls us down.”

In all of us there are the germs of disease; and when these germs develop themselves, exertion is impossible until, by the blessing of God, a cure is effected. Moreover, reason does not sit so firm upon her throne that she may not suddenly reel and fall. Cases of insanity often occur; and when the sceptre drops from reason's hand, we are incapable of intelligent consecutive action.

(3.) *Others may interfere with the carrying out of our wishes, purposes, and plans.* We may seldom require formally to ask the leave of our fellow-creatures; but unless leave is granted, what can we do? It is not much that we can accomplish in the teeth of opposition; and if those by whom we live surrounded carry their opposition so far as to overpower us, we are helpless.

(4.) *We are liable to change our minds.* Many works are for this reason left unfinished. Owing to the rise of unforeseen difficulties we abandon them, or we think it better to do so on finding that finishing them will cost too much. There is a great lack of perseverance among men. We become tired of what occupies us, and withdraw from it, sometimes wisely, and sometimes not. Changes are constantly going on, not only in the external world, but in the world of mind; and the consequence is that not a little work is done every year which would have been left undone, if there had been more caution and consideration. Now and again we come into contact with unfinished buildings, and are led to ask ourselves, Will they ever be finished? When in the act of addressing ourselves to the performance of some work, we are brought to see how foolish and wicked it is, the sooner we desist the better.

For these reasons we have no security that when man begins a piece of work, he will finish it; but do they apply to God? Not one of them. God has revealed Himself to us as the "I am that I am"—the eternally existing and independent one. His resources never undergo any change. He has now all the power

which He ever had. Exercise has not the effect of either increasing or diminishing it; and unchangeable in his power, He is equally so in all His attributes. There is with Him "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

He is greater than all that can be against Him. What He thinks it right, and is disposed to do, He is able to do; and no creature, or number of creatures, can hinder Him. As well might bending reed or willow set itself to oppose the progress of a sweeping flood.

He is "in one mind, and who can turn Him?"—What pleases Him once, pleases Him always; and what He disapproves of at one time, He will disapprove of for ever. He falls into no errors, and hence does not need to change. Change in Him would be a disadvantage—an evil. According to Solomon—"The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand;" and, speaking of Himself by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, God says—"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

If, then, the author of Psalm cxxxviii. had Bible conceptions of God's nature and character—if he was impressed with the infinite superiority of God to man, it is no wonder that he should thus express himself—"*The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy*

mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hand." Literally it is—"The Lord will complete for me (what He has begun)." The immediate reference is to "the whole series of God's gracious dispensations towards David and his seed, beginning with the first choice of the former and ending in the Messiah." If David had this comforting conviction regarding any work of God in which he had a personal interest, we may be sure that he had it regarding every work of God which concerned either his body or his soul, or concerned him either for this world or the next.

Suppose that he had been asked this question,—Is it your belief that the work of salvation which God has begun in you, He will carry on unto completion? would he have hesitated to return an affirmative answer? Assuredly not. Hesitation on his part would have amounted to a reflection on God. It would have shown that he had not that faith in the absolute perfection of God which he should have had. We may doubt that what man begins he will perfect, but there should never be any doubt as to the due and glorious completion of what God begins.

The Psalmist's hope was not in himself,

his friends, or his subjects, in ordinances or instruments, but in God himself, and to so great a height it would naturally rise. What stability or worth has any created object separate from God? The doctrine of Scripture is that in God all things "live, and move, and have their being."

The Psalmist was satisfied that God had begun a good work in or with reference to him, and he was persuaded that there would be no abandonment of it for any reason whatever. A spirit of confidence breathes in the statement which he makes, and it is noticeably wide—"The Lord will complete for me (what He has begun);" and it is most important that all in whom the finger of God has commenced a good work should share the Psalmist's confidence.

He could not affirm that in all its extent the work referred to had been accomplished. It is implied that it had not; but he was convinced that God would not let go His hold of it until He had finished it. God is at the farthest possible remove from bad works. He has no delight in them; and if He had His will, there would not be one of them. Absolutely good himself, He begins only works that are good. We read in Psalm cxlv.—"The Lord is right-

eous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." His works, like the moral law, are a transcript of Himself. There is, therefore, no reason in any work which He begins why He should grow tired of it, and abandon it, and there is no reason in himself. He is the Lord, He changes not, and there are in Him neither excrescences nor defects.

By beginning a work He announces it as His intention to complete it; and with Him there is never any change of purpose, or hindrances of any sort. If the work begun be unconditional, its completion is in the highest degree certain; if conditional in its nature—such a work, *e. g.*, as the salvation of the soul—its completion is just as certain, provided that the required conditions are supplied by those to whom it belongs to supply them. Failure on the creature's side there may be, and frequently is; but on God's side there never is, and cannot be even an approach to failure; and we have in Psalm cxxxviii. 8, the acknowledgment by David of this great and precious truth—"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"—language which every one whose mind is made up to stand through life on God's side is warranted in making his own. Why should God, by His

Spirit, complete the process of salvation in one case and not in another? Is it possible for too many sinners to escape from the state of sin into which they have fallen? Ah! it is not God's wish that any should perish; and if "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," overtake any, it will be their own fault. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."

The agreement of Paul with David on the point brought before us in these words,—"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me," deserves passing notice. What says Paul in the second epistle to the Corinthians?—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." What does he say in the epistle to the Philippians?—"Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." In His hands the human soul is safe. Let Christians do their part, and God will do His. He has pledged His word to save with a complete salvation, by the agency of the Spirit, all who believe in Christ, and keep the faith; and if He were not, the glory of

both His nature and character would suffer eclipse.

The shadow of evil lies across us all—body and mind, character and condition. It may be longer, broader, and darker as regards some than others, but it rests on the children of men without exception; and the question arises, Will it ever be completely taken away? Will what is wrong with the body ever be put right, or a time come when we shall have no consciousness of physical pain, languor, and decay? Will what is wrong in the adjustment and working of the faculties of the mind ever be rectified? Shall we ever attain to perfect holiness, and that measure of happiness of which we are capable, and for which we crave? That will depend on how we act during the probationary period. If as Christians we “with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” and co-operate with “the Spirit of the Lord” in the sphere of duty, each of us may say, without any tremor in the voice, “The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.” On and on will go the work of our salvation, till we shall be constrained to testify that, in fulfilment of His own promise, the Lord hath given us the desires of our hearts, and “done great things for us whereof we are

glad." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." With God there is never any stint of mercy relative to His saints, and they have no occasion to dread a cessation of it. His mercy is "from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him;" but the knowledge of its perpetuity should not prevent the servants of the Most High, as it did not prevent the Psalmist, from casting themselves habitually on His mercy, and entreating Him not to forsake the work of His own hands. The Psalmist was forward to extol the Divine mercy. He felt that mercy was inherent in the nature of God, and that as a magnifier of it he was in no danger of going to an extreme. He rejoiced to number himself among the nobler works of God; he realised how needful and becoming it was that as God's creature and child he should pray God to stay by him, and deal with him as one of His own; and the example which he sets is worthy of universal imitation.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RESISTIBILITY OF THE SPIRIT.

RESISTANCE on the part of man to the Spirit of God, restricting himself to the use of moral means, is no proof of superior strength. It simply shows that he numbers moral freedom among his gifts.

As well may it be argued that a child is stronger than its father, because it refuses at his bidding to lift a pin from the floor. It has no more difficulty disobeying him than it would have the imperative of a playmate; and it is as easy for the creature to say no to God as to a fellow-creature. Indeed, it is often harder to resist human than Divine authority and influence.

The angels, good and bad, excel us in strength. In natural power we are nothing to the "mighty anarch of the universe." Nevertheless, we are exhorted to resist the devil, and encouraged to do so by the assurance that if we resist him, he will show himself

a coward. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This has been done millions of times. The arch-enemy's life has its disappointments and failures. Are we, therefore, stronger than "the prince of the power of the air?" Resistance merely proves that we are morally free, and the same thing may be said of yielding. Divine works are ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Ghost, but His superiority to us in power is not demonstrated when we yield to Him. It is customary for man to yield to woman, and yet she is "the weaker vessel."

Whether resistance to the Holy Spirit implies or not that we are stronger than He, it is a fact that in His action upon the regenerate and the unregenerate He has to bear with much resistance; and the sacred writers teach us to regard His influences as resistible.

In the treatment which the Lord Jesus received at the hands of men is mirrored the treatment which the Spirit receives in the world-wide sphere which He occupies. As in the days of His flesh, Christ had to complain of and mourn over acts of resistance, so has the Spirit. Those who yield to Him are, alas! a small minority as compared with those who resist, and acquire a habit of resisting.

The apostles did not fare any better than the Master. As the witnesses of Christ they were hated, despised, and opposed; and resistance to them was, in reality, resistance to the Spirit.

The antediluvians were chargeable with offering resistance to the Spirit. The Spirit drew one way, and they drew another. If this had not occurred the Spirit would not have been represented as *striving* with them; but in Gen. vi. 3, we meet with these words—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Slightly different renderings are given of this passage; but they do not affect its general significance. The Spirit in Enoch and Noah had dwelt among them, and pled or striven with them, and still patience would be exercised toward them; but if they continued to resist, God warned them that one hundred and twenty years more would see the term of their probation ended by the resistless rush and roar of the waters of the threatened deluge. God is equal to centuries of longsuffering; but when His patience is worn out, as it may be, the striving of the Spirit ceases, and the sword of vengeance is unsheathed. There is no such

thing as God retiring baffled from the scene. Moral means lean back on Omnipotence. The man who came to the feast unprovided with the wedding garment could not prevent his expulsion from the festivities. He could not find his hands who could not find his tongue.

Of all the nations of antiquity Israel stood highest in point of religious privilege. The privileges of other nations were those of a *servant*, Israel's were those of a *son*. There was no privilege denied her which could be wisely conferred at the period and in the circumstances. In the dealings of God with the Jews there was a blessed blending of tenderness and generosity; but the possession of privileges must not be confounded with the improvement of them. The inhabitants of Bethsaida and Chorazin persistently abused the rare privileges which they enjoyed. Their sad case was like to break the Saviour's heart: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." What should have been wings to carry them to heaven became, through their blindness and perversity,

leaden weights to drag them down into perdition.

It is affecting to read Isaiah lxiii. 9:—"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old;" and then read the tenth verse—"But (this *was* a contrast) *they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit.*" If the enjoyment of the advantages peculiar to the chosen people did not result in right feeling and action toward God, it was not because aught was withheld which should have been given. The goodness of God is never at fault, any more than His wisdom and power. He crowned His other gifts by the bestowment of His Holy Spirit upon them; but, in a general way, all was of no avail. They were ever and anon laying themselves open to the charges of unbelief, discontentment, rebellion, and idolatry; and while these features of national character entailed incalculable loss on themselves, and exposed them to dire calamities, their effect on the Holy Spirit, which had been sent to instruct, comfort, and sanctify them, was "not joyous, but grievous." How could they vex or grieve the Spirit but by resisting Him?

and if, in addition to resisting the influences of a succession of prophets, they antagonised the Spirit of God, how real must have been their power of moral resistance! The Spirit was not unobservant of their rebellious attitude and obstinate ways, and He was too holy and benevolent not to be grieved by their guilt, on the one hand, and their misery on the other. In what sense their contumacy put the Holy Spirit to grief it concerns us not now to inquire; but the contemplation of it was not attended with pleasurable emotions, and it was not regarded with utter indifference. The Spirit of spirits is not a heartless being.

That the reference in Isaiah lxiii. 10, is to the third person of the Trinity, and that the children of Israel vexed Him with, and in proportion to, the resistance which they made to His saving operations, I cannot doubt when, on turning to Acts vii. 51, I find Stephen thus testifying against them—“*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*” This was a terrible indictment, and one wonders at Stephen’s boldness in fastening it on them. It must have been at the prompting of the Spirit, by which he was at the

moment borne onward, that he did so; and it is as unworthy of us, as it is perilous, to attempt to explain it away. The moral condition of the persons addressed struck Stephen as extremely corrupt and unpromising. There was strong evidence that their hearts as well as their ears were "uncircumcised," and to his hearers the Old Testament phrases which he used must have been exceedingly distasteful. The extraordinary faithfulness, candour, and courage of Stephen almost prepare us for the martyrdom which followed. His excited auditors were in the very act of resisting the Holy Ghost; but he had something a great deal worse to tell them about themselves. He charged home on them that they had formed a habit of resisting the Holy Spirit. "*Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.*" Their best Friend they had been accustomed to treat as their worst enemy, and one act of resistance but paved the way for another. They did not suppose that in opposing Stephen they were resisting an inspired preacher; but we have Stephen's authority for it, that in refusing to hear him, and submit to Christ as their Prophet, Priest, and King, they were resisting no less a person than the Holy Ghost, and had all their lives shown much refractoriness. The

Greek verb translated "resist" signifies "to fall against or upon," that is, in a hostile manner; and I call attention to this to show that the word "resist" is rather a mild translation of the original.

Stephen was impelled further to state that in resisting the Holy Spirit they were doing as their fathers before them had done. It was no pleasure to Stephen, himself a son of Abraham, to know that they were treading in the footsteps of their ancestors; but he could not help noting the fact. It was no excuse, since moral character is not transmissible, that as they were acting in relation to the Spirit, so preceding generations had acted. Stephen's object in adding "as your fathers, so ye" was, as Dr. D. Brown puts it, "to serve his auditors heirs to their fathers' incorrigible perversity and heathenish carnality." Now if resistance to the Spirit was offered by Stephen's hearers and their fathers, His influence must be resistible; and it would be well if M. Henry's modest suggestion were generally acted on,—*"That grace therefore which effects the change (conversion) might more fitly be called victorious grace than irresistible."* To speak of the Spirit in His dealings with man's soul as putting forth

irresistible energy, is to contradict both Isaiah and the proto-martyr; nay more, it is to contradict the Spirit Himself.

The familiarity of Paul with the passage from Isaiah on which I have been briefly commenting seems to have influenced him in penning this exhortation,—“*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.*” These words remind me of Tertullian’s remark—“The Spirit is a delicate thing;” and of Dr. Parker’s,—“We grieve society by a *crime*, but we grieve the Spirit by a *wish*.” To say, with Bengel, that “the Holy Spirit is grieved not in Himself, but in us,” is obviously to dilute the apostle’s meaning. The term “grieve” is anthropopathic; but it must not be forgotten that, as Dr. Eadie says, “there are feelings in it (the Godhead) so analogous to those excited in men, that they are named after such human emotions.” The Holy Spirit of God had peculiar claims on the Ephesian saints; and it would ill become them, by unchristian modes of speech and conduct, to fret His personal susceptibilities. Many young people are restrained from sin by the conviction that, if they were to allow their feet to be caught in temptation’s snares, dear earthly friends would be grieved; and Christians owe so much to the Spirit that they should

be ever on their guard against grieving Him. It is tacitly assumed in the exhortation that the Spirit had "infleshed" Himself in the Ephesians. Their hearts were temples of the Holy Ghost, and if there was a nook or corner of them unillumined and uncleansed, the blame lay with themselves. It was their duty to be "filled with the Spirit"—so filled that they would be at a loss to determine whether they were in the Spirit or the Spirit was in them; and there are several Scripture characters of whom it is affirmed that they were "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." They had "received the Spirit by the hearing of faith;" but the reception of the Spirit did not necessarily involve His retention. The Holy Spirit was "susceptible of affront and sorrow;" and if they did not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith God had called them," He would be grieved, and constrained ultimately to withdraw. They could not expect Him to comfort them, if by their indifference, their ingratitude, their listless or pretended co-operation, their inconsistencies, they vexed and grieved Him.

There is an inseparable connection between contumelious treatment of the Spirit and "the sorer punishment"—"Of how much sorer punishment . . . shall he be thought

worthy . . . and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" Grace must not be met with insult.

The Spirit constituted their seal unto the day of redemption; but it behoved them to take care lest it should be broken and destroyed. I go this length, for I agree with Dean Alford that "there could hardly be a plainer denial of it (the doctrine of final perseverance) by implication" than we have in the thirtieth verse of the fourth chapter of Ephesians. To quote again from Alford,—“In what would issue the *grieving* of the Holy Spirit, if not in quenching His testimony and causing Him to depart from them?" If it is possible, then, for Christians so to live as to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and they are in constant danger of so living, the resistibility of the Spirit must be held and preached as a part of the truth revealed in the Bible. In what way can saints or sinners grieve Him except by resisting Him? There is a passage in 1 Thessalonians (chapter v. 19) which demonstrates that the grieving of the Spirit may go on until He is quenched or extinguished. It runs thus—“*Quench not the Spirit.*”

That fire which is fanned by the breath of the Almighty—hell-fire—is “unquenchable.”

Not so the warming, quickening, purifying flame of the Spirit in the hearts of God's children. Some expositors earnestly contend that in this exhortation—the second in the list—Paul refers to the *supernatural* agency of the Holy Spirit, but I cannot accept their view, because,—(1.) The “tender caution” is addressed to *all* the Thessalonian saints, and miraculous gifts were possessed by only a *few* of them. (2.) We cannot quench the Spirit, under the symbol of fire, in others. (3.) The stress of the context is against it.

The kindlings of piety by the Spirit of God in the heart may, however, be damped and altogether repressed, and knowing this, Paul exhorted the Ephesians not to quench the Spirit. It is granted on all hands that His “ordinary” operations may be “abated,” but we cannot permit the substitution of the word *abate* for the much stronger word *quench*. The Spirit's highest, liveliest, brightest flame may be quenched, and, according to Trapp, there are two ways of extinguishing it,—“either by the withdrawing of fuel (neglect of ordinances), or by casting on water (falling into foul courses).” Now if the Spirit can be quenched, it follows that He does not exert upon the mind an irresistible in-

fluence, but sacredly respects its free moral agency.

It is a solemn thought that salvation may be found and lost, or that the Spirit of God, as the applier of salvation, may be resisted, grieved, and quenched; but why should any thus treat the Holy Spirit? There are persons whom it is for our good to resist, but the Spirit of grace has no place among them. There is much within and around us which we ought to resist, but it is criminal and ruinous to the soul to resist the healthful influences of God's Spirit. Instead of opposing Him, let us bare our hearts to Him, in order that by His working on and in them as fire, they may be thoroughly purged from the dross of sin.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WORLD THE SPIRIT'S FIELD.

WATER, fire, wind, are fitting and familiar symbols of the Holy Spirit, and they are symbols of the Spirit's own choosing. The effect of water on the body, and on certain classes of material things, admirably illustrates the effect produced by the Spirit on the heart and lives of those by whom He is honoured and obeyed. Water is a necessary of existence ; it refreshes, gladdens, and invigorates ; it has cleansing properties ; and without the Spirit there can be no spiritual life, joy, strength, or progress. "We have been told that human nature is 'lost,' 'dead,' and corrupt, and by the very fact that it is so, it is clear that its condition can be effectually reached only by spiritual influence—that is, by influence that is superior to the nature on which it acts, and that is *quickening* or life-giving." So reasons Dr. Parker.

Fire gives light and diffuses warmth ; it melts

and purifies metals; and the source of all the knowledge, happiness, and holiness found amongst men, is the Spirit. Absolutely holy himself, He is the cause of holiness in all who fall sweetly in with His working. To be "born of water and the Spirit" is to be born of the *purifying* spirit; to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire" is to be baptized with the *purifying* Spirit. The Spirit as a fire burns nothing but dross and chaff.

We conceive of the wind as free and impartial. It bloweth where it listeth. True; but where does it not list to blow? The wind's field is the world. The human eye cannot see it, or follow it in its shiftings; but we associate impartiality with it. Sooner or later it visits every cheek and spot. Is the Holy Spirit less free and impartial? No, but infinitely more so. The Spirit is a law unto Himself. Officially He is inferior to the Father and the Son; but essentially He is their equal. He works when, how, and where He pleases. True; but with Him "there is no respect of persons." All souls are precious in His eyes; and the end which He proposes to himself, and which He pursues, under every Divine dispensation, with a wisdom and patience all His own, is their deliverance from

sin, danger, and misery. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Spirit is unimpeded in His movements, and largely inscrutable in His operations; but as the wind is known by its effects, so the Spirit is known by His effects in the spirit-region. There are not two places relative to the Spirit. He fills heaven and earth, and wherever He is He operates according to His nature and character. The Spirit is distinct from the Bible, from apostles and prophets, and from Christians. It is a principle with Him, and a delight, to work in and by them; but He works independently of them. He is where the Word of God—the multiplication and circulation of copies of which have been committed into the hands of the Christian church—has not penetrated, where church-going bells have never been heard, and where the foot of the lone missionary hath never trod; and everywhere in this world He is unremittingly and beneficently active. He is "the Spirit of truth," and as God's and man's servant why should He employ truth as His instrument in one country, and not in another? It will be admitted that

He can be with the millions of mankind that are in comparative darkness and wretchedness, and that there is no limit to the help which He can give them, present as He is in their midst in the totality of His perfections. Well, since "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," why, we reverently ask, should He not feel it to be obligatory to assist them as far as His knowledge extends? The gloomy state and degraded character of the heathen are all the more intelligible when we assume the existence of the devil and his angels; and we can understand what is pure, noble, and good among them all the better when we assume that individually they are the objects of the Holy Spirit's interest and care.

"More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of"—

e.g., the Spirit, "who waits to be gracious." It is not true that the salvation of any sinner is conditioned on others' doing their duty. More or less light is shining around every man, and, provided that we welcome and walk in it, it will increase; but if it should not, the issue in eternity will be glorious. "Who-soever hath, to him shall be given." Privilege is the measure of responsibility. "These

having not the law, are a law unto themselves."

Which is the greater gift—Christ or the Spirit? The impression left by the Bible on the mind is that it cost God the Father more to send Christ than to send the Spirit. We nowhere read that God spared not the Spirit, but we do read that He "spared not His own Son." The safest answer which we can give to such a question is to say, that Christ and the Spirit are both great and necessary gifts. Take either away, and salvation becomes impossible. As "holy George Herbert" addresses Sunday, so may we address the Divine Spirit:—

"Man had straightforward gone
To endless death ; but Thou dost pull
To turn us round and look on one,
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still"—

to wit, the one whom John Newton saw "hanging on a tree," and by the sight of whom his wild career was stopped.

What, then, is the extent of that work which is declared in the Bible, and acknowledged to be indispensable to the actual redemption of lost sinners—the work of the Holy Spirit? This is a question of the greatest importance, and if I were to deny that the Spirit's work *covers*

the whole world of human beings, I should feel that I was contradicting Scripture, and casting reflections on the Divine Spirit. If we limit the love of the Father, and the atonement of Christ, consistency requires that we should introduce into the work of the Spirit the element of limitation. If, on the other hand, we glory in the universality of the Father's love, and the Son's propitiation, we must, to preserve our consistency, glory in the universality of the Spirit's work. If I am asked, consequently, what evidence is there that the work of the Holy Spirit is of unlimited extent I reply, all the evidence adducible for the world-embracing love of the Father, and the race-wide atonement of the Son, and it scarcely needs to be said how immense that is in quantity, and unobjectionable in quality. There is a hymn by Archbishop Trench which thus begins:—

“I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway, or open street,
That he, and we, and all men move
Under a canopy of love
As broad as the blue sky above.”

Is this going too far? If the archbishop errs, he errs in the best of company. His lines are

just the ninth verse of Psalm cxlv. in a metrical form—"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." In a praiseful mood Charles Wesley thus addresses the celestial Father:—

"Thy undistinguishing regard
Was cast on Adam's sinful race;
For all Thou hast in Christ prepared
Sufficient, sovereign, saving grace.
The world He suffered to redeem,
For all He hath the atonement made;
*For those that will not come to Him
The ransom of His life was paid."*

Is this going too far? No; for one night, in quiet, friendly, serious, spiritual talk with Nicodemus, He who "spake as never man spake" gave utterance to these heart-thrilling, hope-inspiring words—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

If we shrink not, then, from the use of the expression "An undivided Trinity," we may confidently conclude that the work of the Spirit is no narrower, by the breadth of a hand, *than* the love of the Father, and the Son's

atoning death. The ministry of Christ was confined to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but His sympathy stretched beyond them. How pleased He was to testify—"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!" When the opportunity of preaching Himself to the despised Samaritans offered, He was eager to improve it. His manner to the Syro-Phœnician woman was repelling at first, but how gracious and kind He was to her at the last! She got more than a crumb—a whole loaf; and the afflicted daughter was not forgotten. Are the Spirit's feelings different toward the heathen? If so, 'tis strange that the invitations of Scripture, which are the Spirit's invitations—as if man could not be trusted to frame them—and which cannot by any possibility be made more winning and universal than they are, should be what we find them. Here is the last—"And the Spirit and the bride say, come! And let him that heareth say, come! And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Suppose that I were to repeat to an audience composed of all nations the invitation, word by word, would the Holy Spirit feel grieved, and should I be guilty of overstepping my commission as a preacher of

the Gospel? If the Spirit desire the salvation of only some, be they few or many, why does He invite all? Would He be sorry if all that breathe the common air, attracted by the ripple and the gleam of the water of life, were to stoop down and slake their thirst with it? We may be indifferent, but He wants all who need salvation to possess it; and if the Spirit is wishful for the salvation of all the heathen, can it be that He has never hinted His love? The assumption that He is with them, and making the most of the circumstances to bless them for this and prepare them for the next world, and that His efforts have not been quite fruitless, aids us considerably in the interpretation of such a passage as this,—“And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” For persons begirt with privileges as we are in these favoured kingdoms, this question, why, if the Spirit loves the teeming myriads of the heathen, is not more being done for them? may be a natural one, but its superficiality is apparent. It would be more profitable to inquire, why has not a more copious effusion of the influences of the Spirit been shed down on them? Whose duty is it to send them the Bible and

the Gospel? How much is being done for them? What more could be done—consistently with Divine wisdom—the Divine plan? Why was not as much done for Sodom and Gomorrah as for Chorazin and Bethsaida? Because there were insuperable obstacles. Heavenly wisdom forbade; but Sodom and Gomorrah had their own privileges, which they ought not to have abused. God did not know what more He could have done for Judah; and the question, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" might have been extended to what lay beyond the vineyard of Judah. The resources of the Spirit are inexhaustible, and we have every encouragement to draw upon them. We may have as much of the Spirit as we choose, and are capable of receiving; but if we wish a richer baptism for ourselves and others, there are certain conditions which must be attended to. We must open wide the mouth in prayer. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" They who have the Spirit have "all gifts in one," and the way to get more of the Spirit is to utilise those gracious influences

which are playing upon and around us. It is Christ's will that the world should be evangelised with all speed. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, *and unto the uttermost part of the earth;*" and to cast any portion of the blame for the world's non-evangelisation upon the Spirit, is to grieve Him and do Him manifest injustice. What truth there is in heathen lands the Spirit uses to the utmost; but the Spirit has too much intelligence and self-control to resort to force.

CHAPTER XXII.

MORE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT'S WORK.

THE work given Christ to do on earth was soon accomplished. Some thirty-four years lay between the manger and the cross, from which was unfurled the flag of victory, with this inscription upon it—"It is finished." In consequence of natural increase of light and population, the work of the Spirit goes on widening and deepening from age to age, but it is ever the same in quality, and it was not begun yesterday. The Spirit is not a learner, and He is above the law of development. There is nothing of the nature of an experiment about His work, and it dates back to the years before the flood, and still farther. He ministered to our first parents before and after the fall.

If the antediluvians made the place of their habitation hideous with their violence and

vices, so hideous that God had no alternative but to sweep them away with a flood, they were wicked in spite of the Spirit. He strove with them, but they resisted Him, and their resistance cost them their lives. At the expiration of the one hundred and twenty years of grace round them rose the remorseless waters, and swiftly they lay buried in one huge watery grave. If Noah, as he emerged from the ark of safety, had been met with this question—"Are there few that be saved?" he would have had to answer—"Few indeed; but eight souls in all to begin the world anew." The Spirit was no fitful, unskilful, or partial worker among the antediluvians. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Mark the words "with man"—that is, with the whole antediluvian world; for when we say "man is mortal," we mean all mankind.

Though Christ spoke of sending the Spirit, and said to the disciples that if He did not go away the Spirit would not come unto them, and though we call Christianity the dispensation of the Spirit, it must not be supposed that the work of the Spirit took its beginning from Pentecost. That would be an awful inference to draw, if, in order to see the kingdom of God, sinners must be "born of water and the Spirit."

Each dispensation as it came from God was a dispensation of the Spirit. Christianity is only emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. In connection with its introduction, and with a view to its establishment, there was a larger outpouring of the Spirit, and the intention was that the Spirit should abide forever. The more truth that is embodied in any religious system, there is the more room and reason for the working of the Spirit. As Dr. Daunt illustratively observes—"The dawn we know, in the order of nature, precedes the sunrise; the light of the sun is seen before the sun himself appears; and yet the rising of the sun may truly be called a new thing—a distinctive epoch?"

To the elect nation was given the Spirit "to profit withal;" and there were some who heard the Spirit's gentle voice, and gave themselves up to His guidance. But the nation as a whole consisted of resisters of the Holy Ghost. It is recorded of them that "they rebelled, and vexed His (God's) Holy Spirit;" but this was not possible if the Spirit had not been graciously imparted to them, and exerted His saving energies upon them.

In the "Pentecostal miracle," of which we are furnished with a minute and impressive

description in the second chapter of Acts, the Apostle Peter recognised a fulfilment of Joel's splendid, comprehensive, and far-reaching prophecy. In quoting it he follows the Septuagint, and he evidently did not think that at the first feast of Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah it was exhaustively fulfilled. There was rather a commencement of fulfilment, "but a commencement which embraced the ultimate fulfilment, as the germ enfolds the tree." The occurrence in the prophecy of such expressions as these—"pour out" (the Hebrew verb signifies "communication in rich abundance, like a rainfall or waterfall"), "all flesh," and "whosoever" suggests that we are in more danger of depressing and narrowing than exalting and extending unduly the work of the Holy Spirit. The flood of Divine influence by which Pentecost was signalised has left the channel permanently broader and deeper.

The presence of the Paraclete more than compensates for Christ's absence, which was needed to give completeness to the scheme of mediation. This was the view taken by our Lord himself. He comforted His disciples by telling them that they would gain more than *they* would lose by His departure. "It is expedi-

ent for you that I go away." Toward the close of His ministry He spoke much about the promised Spirit, and He was solicitous to impress it upon them that their efforts to spread the Gospel and save souls would be grandly seconded and supplemented by the Holy Spirit. "And when He (the Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

In these verses, as Barnes remarks, we have "a condensed and most striking view of the work of the Holy Spirit;" and to account for the form of the deliverance notice must be taken of the occasion or circumstances. The passage teaches that the Spirit *stands in a direct relation to the world*. The world is His sphere, and has all along been His sphere. The difference under Christianity is found in the *measure*—the plentifulness—of the outpouring of the Spirit.

Moreover, the passage bears us out in saying that in His actings on men He treats them as what they are—*intelligent, free, moral beings*. What are His methods? Demonstration and persuasion; and this answer brings to recollec-

tion the apostle's words—"Knowing therefore the terror of the law, we *persuade* men." Paul was a moral suasionist. So was Christ: "Will ye also go away?" So is the Spirit: "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin." The marginal and approved reading is "He will *convince*." To the world's error He will oppose truth, to its wrong He will oppose right; and in all cases in which He does not convince unto salvation, He will convict unto condemnation. His aim and object are to produce salutary conviction, or throw light on sin in general, and *the sin of unbelief in particular*; and it was gloriously and prophetically realised in connection with Peter's bold, earnest, practical, pointed, scriptural, argumentative address on the day of Pentecost. Special mention is made of the sin of unbelief, though this sin can be committed by those only to whom Christ has been revealed, because it is "the great ruining sin," and in some form or other the root-sin. Here I cannot refrain from quoting M. Henry's observation,—“Every sin is so (damning) in its own nature; no sin is so to those that believe in Christ;” and if it is unbelief that damns, it must be immensely important that it should be seen in its true light—the light which the

Spirit flashes upon it. "Man is not responsible for his belief or unbelief." So we are sometimes told; but the assertion gets shrivelled up, as fire shrivels paper, the instant we bring it into the neighbourhood of these words—"of sin, because they believe not on me." Sinners on whose ears falls the Gospel's joyful sound are able to believe in Christ; it is their bounden duty to believe on Him, and for them to restrain believing, as so many do, is the height of folly and wickedness. Nothing can go right or well so long as faith in Christ is not exercised.

Another point on which the Spirit, whose full-volumed coming was conditioned on Christ's return to heaven, seeks to cast light is "*righteousness*." The righteousness referred to, as the clause which immediately follows proves, is the *righteousness or innocence of Christ*. I prefer the term *righteousness* to the term *innocence*. It was no doubt "innocent blood" which Judas so basely betrayed; but Christ was more than innocent. He grew up holy; and this was the more to His credit that sin was all round Him, and that He did not dwell apart. He was "Jesus Christ the righteous"—never cherished a wrong desire or did a wrong act,

but fulfilled all righteousness. But this was not the *world's* estimate. The Jewish people regarded Him as a cheat, and hence they stood in need of being confuted and convinced that they were in error, and that He was all that He claimed to be—the Messiah. Yes; and by the preaching of the apostles, carried home to their minds, hearts, and consciences, this conviction was created, and nourished into strength within multitudes of them. If they had laid aside prejudice and paused to think, how could any have continued to believe that Jesus was an impostor—the king of impostors? In His ascension—a well-attested event—they had evidence “bright as heaven, that He was indeed the Saviour of the world, God’s righteous servant to justify many, because He had borne their iniquities.” “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” But if Jesus, overcome by the sorrow of the disciples, had decided to remain corporeally with them, this crowning proof of His personal righteousness would have had no existence.

“The Christ of history” was God’s response to the insinuations and lies of the devil, and the victory which he achieved over the father and mother of all living. “In the fulness of

time" He came forth as the Revealer and Vindicator of God, and as the Champion of our ruined race; and heroically He acquitted himself. By His propitiatory life and death He

"Raised the ruins of our race
To life and God again."

As far as this could be done, it was done—done to such an extent that, if any of Adam's family again fall under the power of Satan, the blame will be all their own. Sin broke the Saviour's heart; but He bruised the serpent's head. In every encounter which He had with the devil, who was the shadow accompanying His brightness, He came off victorious. Christ was imposed on by no guise and no manœuvre. As He drew near the end of His sorrowful life, "the master of misrule" was much in His thoughts; and it was His joy to think of him as an exposed and defeated foe. He fell before the malice of His enemies, but in falling He crushed the infernal usurper; and there was one eye which saw him "as lightning fall from heaven,"—the eye of Christ, whose knowledge embraces past, present, and future. He might well, therefore, assure His disciples, with the design of reconciling them to His going away, that, when the Spirit would come in all the

wealth of His saving influences, He would seek to produce conviction with regard to a third point—*judgment*—"of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged."

Of judgment in general. Men may choose evil, and cleave to it; but if they do, let them not fancy that they will go unchecked, unjudged, uncondemned, unpunished. All who take the devil's side, and keep it, must expect to share his doom.

"Of judgment"—the judgment of the devil—a specimen act of judgment, and the best obtainable. His expulsion from his usurped dominion over men is in progress. It has not yet become a thing of the past; but it awaits him. The blow aimed at God and the weal of the universe, will recoil on his own head. By the death of Christ he was judicially overthrown, or condemned to lose his hold; and there is no reason why the ransomed of the Lord should dread his power to enslave and curse. He has been judged, and for him to be judged as Christ judged him was to be condemned.

To sum up, in a single sentence, the three points—sin, righteousness, and judgment—specified by Christ, and with reference to *which* it is the wish and endeavour of the

Spirit in these Gospel days of meridian splendour to produce conviction, it is the office of the Spirit to bring sinners to Christ, and to the enjoyment of the salvation which is in Him for them.

The Spirit is not His own theme ; He speaks neither from nor of Himself. Pardon and the other blessings of salvation do not hinge on faith in the Spirit ; and the apostles never professed themselves preachers of the Spirit. " We preach," said they, " not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," and in so doing they gratified and honoured the Spirit. Not the knowledge of the Spirit, but the knowledge of God and Christ combined, is eternal life. A knowledge of the Spirit is comparatively unimportant. It mattered little that certain disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost. The existence, the love, and the working of the Spirit are not conditional on our possessing a knowledge of Him. Without the Spirit we can be and do nothing to any good purpose ; but the name of the world's Saviour is Jesus Christ ; and it is those who believe in Him as their Sin-bearer and High Priest who receive forgiveness for His name's sake, and who have Him of God made unto them " wis-

dom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Let us take care then, lest there be in us "an evil heart of unbelief," seeing that the tendency of unbelief is to separate its subjects from the Fountain of all life, honour, and blessedness.

Each member of our sinful race may say, God the Father is for me, Christ the Son is for me, and the Divine Spirit, the Comforter, is for me. If the Spirit were hostile or indifferent, we would not be "prisoners of hope," and we could not be summoned to "turn to the stronghold" which the "God of all grace" has provided for us in Christ, and which the cunning and power of the devil can neither undermine nor demolish. In the hearts of all who believe the Gospel, "how that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"—the Spirit produces love, and the Spirit is love. Love is His name and His nature; and if He is our friend, it is due to Him that we should not resist and grieve Him, but that we should be all attention to His voice, and open our hearts to Him, that He may enter in and make them His dwelling-place. There was once a truant boy, who, that he might be in a position to tell his parents that he had been to school,

but could not get in, knocked so gently at the door that no one could hear him. The Spirit is not like that. He is in earnest to "open our eyes, to turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," and if we were as much in earnest to be saved, we should be in no danger of perishing.

A distinction is drawn in the Scriptures between the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Spirit; but I confess to a dislike of the phrase, "the common influences of the Spirit." If by this phrase it be meant that these influences are neither adapted nor intended to have a saving effect, it should never be employed. The influence of the Spirit on those who yield and are saved is not different in kind from that which is brought to bear on those whose pleasure it is to abide in unbelief and sin. It depends ultimately on sinners themselves whether the Spirit shall be to them "the savour of death unto death," or "the savour of life unto life," and there are many in heaven for whom less was done than for some that are in hell.

When crossing the wide Atlantic in a Cunard steamer I observed that, when a favourable breeze sprang up, no time was lost in setting and spreading the sails. The Holy Spirit will

not accommodate himself to us. It is for us to accommodate ourselves to Him, and we cannot be over-accommodating. If we avail ourselves of His proffered help, and, in fact, catch all we can of His gales in our voyage across life's troubled and treacherous ocean, He will not fail to speed us on our course; and we shall suffer shipwreck neither at a distance from, nor in the mouth of, the harbour, but shall have an entrance "ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."



